PRIVATE EYE

No. 846
Friday
20 May '94

90p

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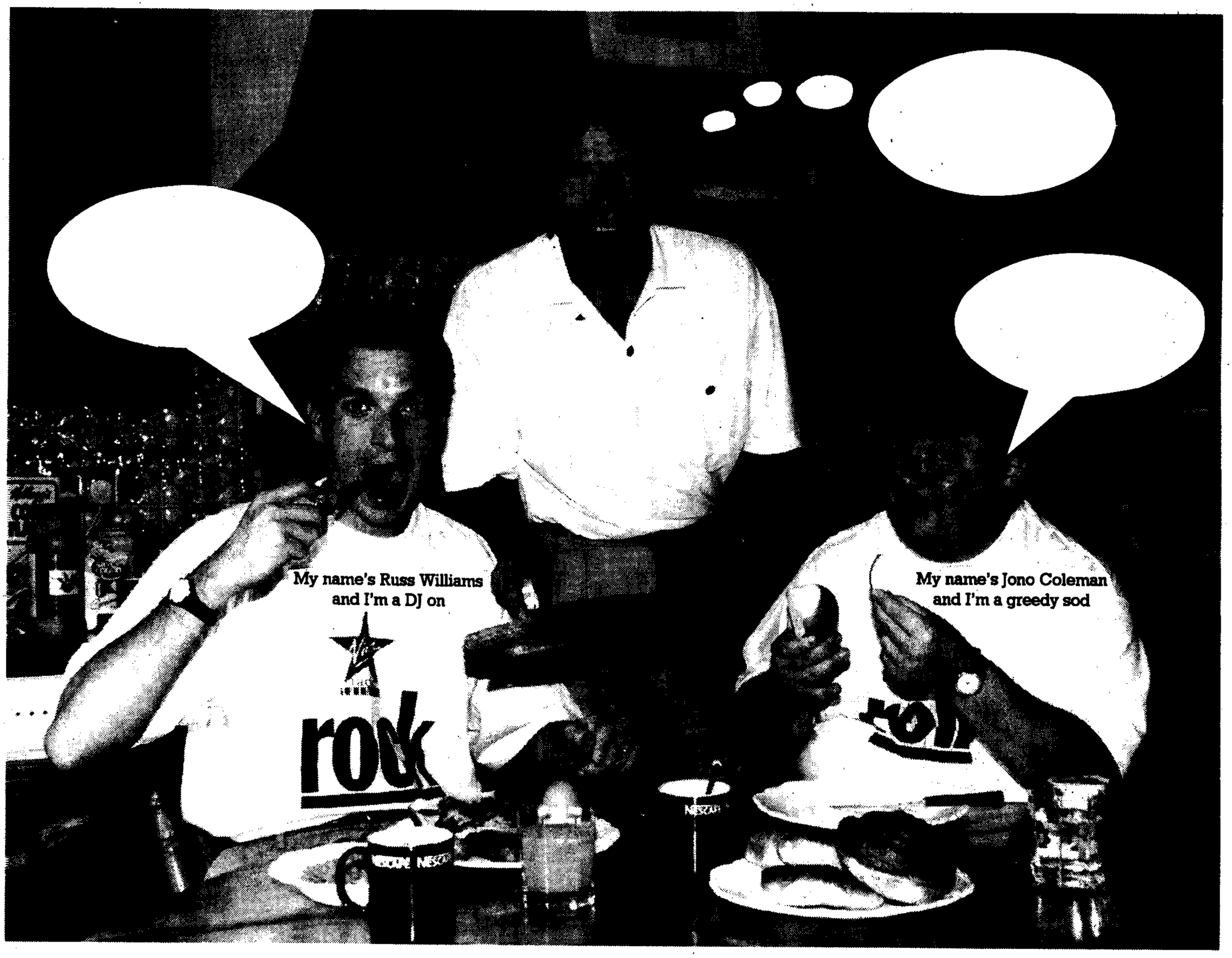

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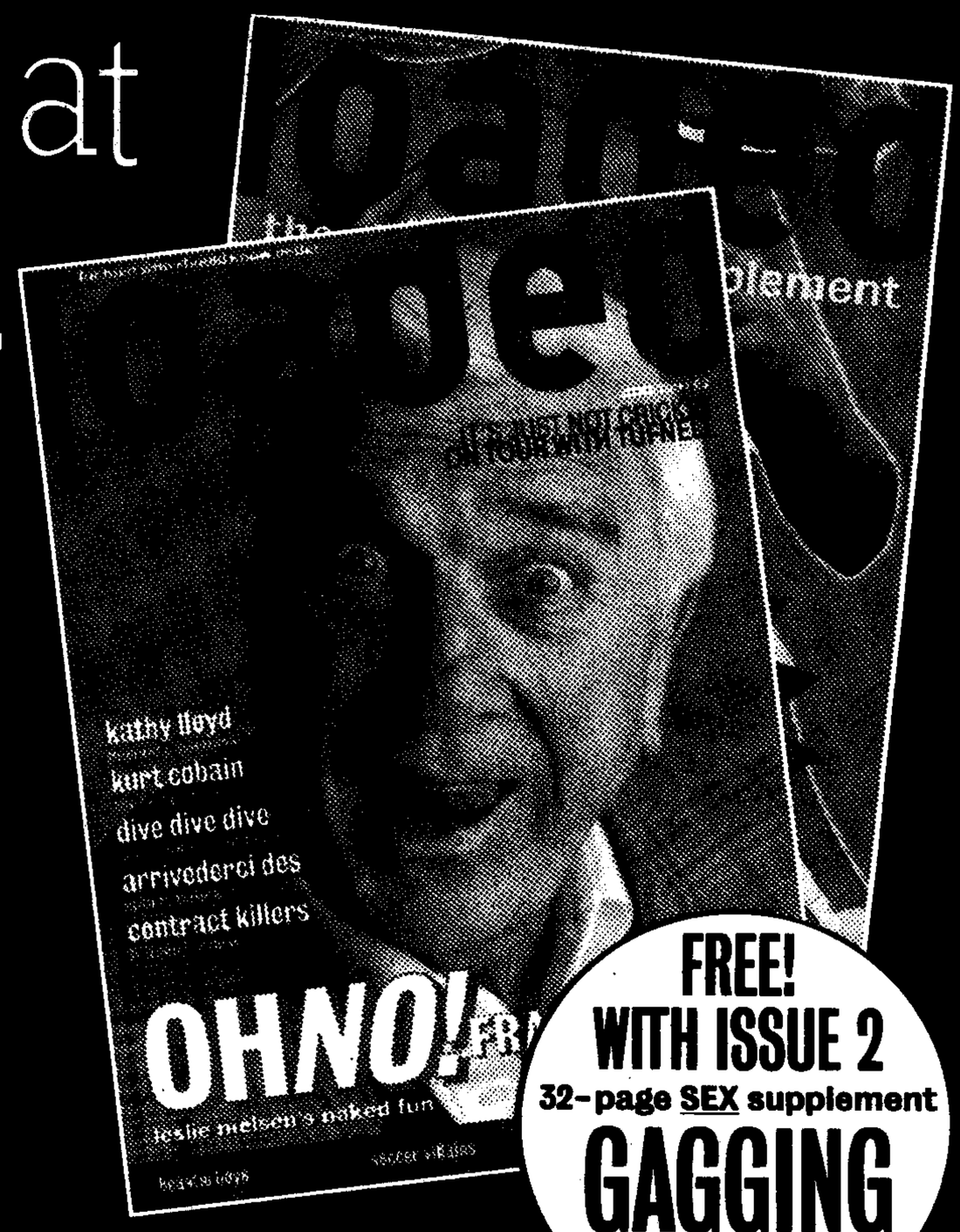

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a business affair

A love triangle in literary circles.

15

IN THE WEST END AND SELECTED CINEMAS IN LONDON AND THE SOUTH FROM MAY 27

Gnome APOLOGY

In common with all other newspapers we may have given the impression in the last few years that John Smith was in some way unequal to the job of Leader of the Opposition, let alone that of Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Headlines such as PISS OFF BALDY, YOU TWO-FACED SCOTTISH GIT, LET'S FACE IT, FATTY, YOU'RE USELESS and SMITH'S TRIUMPH ON OMOV STILL LEAVES DOUBT OVER ELECTION CREDIBILITY may have led readers to believe that the Gnome group of newspapers viewed Mr Smith as less than an astute politician, an inspired leader and an international statesman of the highest order.

We would like to make it clear that Mr Smith was indeed all of the above. And more. We accept that, had he lived, he would undoubtedly have won the General Election and proved himself to be the greatest Prime Minister this country has ever known or will ever know.

We unreservedly apologise for any unintentional suggestion to the contrary.

ON OTHER PAGES

BLAIR — second-rate nobody with bouffant hair and a silly smile 2

BROWN — why has this left-wing whinger never married? 3

COOK — would you vote for this wild-eyed Commie beardie? 4

PRESCOTT — Bog off, you Bolshevik bully-boy. Go back to the QE2 and jump overboard! 7

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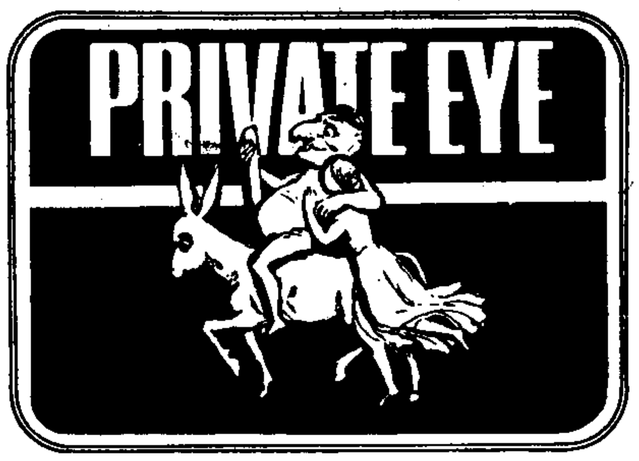


COLOUR SECTION

IN HIS speech to Scottish Tories last Friday, the prime minister appealed for less "knocking, carping and sneering" in politics following the death of John Smith. "I often have little taste for the politics of point-scoring or for belittling others," he revealed.

Can this be the same John Major who recently attacked John Smith as "Monsieur Oui, the Poodle of Brussels"?

Meanwhile, Michael Heseltine joined the love-in with a moving tribute to Smith's generosity and "niceness". No doubt he had forgotten that, just two years ago, he denounced Smith as a mean-spirited crook — "the very incarnation of Fagin".

But the biggest supplier of fine old humbug last week, as one would expect, was the Fourth Estate. "Britain has lost a fine and dedicated public servant," the *Daily Express* announced on the morning after Smith's death. "The *Daily Express* never doubted his sincerity." Presumably it must have been a quite different John Smith who was denounced in the *Express* two years ago as "the Labour Party's Arfur Daley" — not a character noted for sincerity. "Mr Smith," the *Express* observed at the time, "is rather more iffy than his nice face suggests."

A few months later, on 24 October 1992, the *Express*'s political pundit Chris Buckland began his column thus: "A party in a mess. Rank and file MPs out of control. An economic policy that is a proven loser. Growing rumblings against the leader. Deep divisions over Europe. John is really in a pickle. John Smith, that is." Following the Labour leader's death, Buckland changed his tune dramatically. John Smith, he wrote last Friday, "helped unite the factions and create a solid base on which to build the success that has, for a decade and a half, eluded Labour."

Over at Wapping, the *Sun* was also experiencing what might be described as a continuity problem. Last Friday it was fulsome in its praise. "John Smith was a good man... It is a measure of his dedication and courage that he willingly threw himself into the pressure cooker of Parliament even though he had seen death and cheated it."

Back in 1992, the *Sun*'s respect for Smith had been rather harder to detect. "He's fat, he's 53, he's had a heart attack and he's taking on a stress-loaded job," the paper gloated on 17 July 1992. "He may be leader but he can't get life insurance... he could be Britain's first kamikaze politician."

Pass the sickbag, Alice.

HOW TO explain the dreadful hypocrisy of ministers suddenly calling for an end to party strife and a period of peaceful coalition?

For some time now leading advisers to the prime minister and others have been contemplating the possibility of electoral defeat and planning in advance some damage limitation. They hark back to the last time the Tories faced defeat, October 1974, when a minority Labour government called an election which it was supremely confident of winning.

Suddenly, staring defeat in the face, the Tory political dog-fighters started to make speeches against political dog-fights. They appealed to the "essential unity of the nation", the "basic decency" which binds opponents together in the national interest. They called for a period of calm, and even for a coalition government.

The call was so obviously hypocritical no one took it seriously: not Labour; not the electorate; and especially not an ambitious Tory frontbencher called Margaret Thatcher.

IN ALL THE hullabaloo surrounding the Tory backbenchers' filibuster which ruined the very modest civil rights (disabled persons) bill, little attention has been paid to the chiropractors' bill which went through the Commons on the same day.

The bill was an entirely uncontroversial measure to control quacks who set up as experts in back pain. It had been introduced by a Tory MP, David Lidington, and was supported by Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. The Labour frontbencher on health, Dawn Primarolo, spoke for six minutes on the bill's second reading, and for one minute as it sailed through committee. It came back for its "report stage" and third reading on Friday 6 May, a parliamentary day which was expected to be devoted entirely to the bill to extend civil rights for disabled people.

Suddenly Tory backbenchers started to show tremendous interest in the bill. Richard Spring, the MP for Bury St Edmunds whose interest in health issues dates back to his former directorship of the investment bankers Merrill Lynch, started off with a couple of fatuous amendments, including one which insisted that a lawyer should be appointed as deputy registrar of the new Chiropractors Council.

This amendment was denounced from the Liberal Democrat frontbench as "absurd, time-wasting nonsense"; but Mr Spring pressed on, fighting his way through the briefs provided for him by the department of social security. To the embarrassment of Lidington, who meekly and briefly moved the third reading, another clutch of Tories insisted on prolonging the debate: John Sykes (Scarborough), a former oil company executive; Lady Olga Maitland (Sutton and Cheam), a former gossip columnist; Mr Spring again; Roger Knapman (Stroud), a chartered surveyor; and commercial barrister James Clappison (Hertsmere) were all suddenly overcome with worries about the regulation of people who specialise in back pain.

They went on and on for two and a half hours until the House finally staggered on to the civil rights (disabled persons) bill. The long delay made the next filibuster, led by Lady Olga, so very much easier.

- ***Hallo to Eve Pollard!*** 7
- ***Eddie Browning Goes Free*** 14
- ***£100 Prize Crossword*** 16
- ***Virginia Bottomley's Diary*** 25

Street of Shame

HOW DID the *News of the Screws* get all those quotes from Adam Morris, the LSE student who, it alleged, was the gay lover of Michael Brown MP, bearing in mind that Morris hadn't cooperated with the paper?

Come to that, how did one of its undercover reporters get an introduction to Paul Martin, the former Tory activist who was also said to be a close friend of Morris?

Step forward Paul Birrell, chairman of the LSE Conservative Association. Though only a teenager, Birrell is well-versed in the ways of the street of shame: his dad, George Birrell, was until recently Scottish editor of the *Daily Express*.

When young Birrell introduced his chum Morris to Michael Brown at a party given by Westminster South Young Conservatives in February, he noticed how well the student and the MP seemed to be "bonding" — and immediately cash registers started ringing in his head.

So, in association with *News of the Screws* hack Mazher Mahmood, he arranged an elaborate set-up. First, Birrell cajoled Morris into talking about his fondness for Brown — and recorded the conversation with a hidden microphone. He then took Mahmood to a gay bar in Edinburgh, where he introduced him to Paul Martin, the third man in the "gay sex triangle" (as the *Screws*'s front-page headline described it). Again, the conversation was secretly recorded.

The *News of the Screws* was delighted with Birrell's efforts, paying him £10,000. But Tories at the LSE are rather less impressed at his betrayal of a fellow-student and friend. There are now moves to strip him of his chairmanship of the Conservative Association.

Still, he should be assured of a job at the sleazier end of Fleet Street when he graduates.

BLAMING wrongfully convicted men can prove expensive, as the *Sun* has recently found out.

The rag published a fulsome (if short) apology to the Birmingham Six for quoting at length the views of former West Midlands police that the six were "guilty as hell".

The *Sun* is not given to apologising voluntarily, and the apology was of course forced on it by a libel action. Following the recent debacle at the *Sunday Telegraph*, which quoted the same police officer to the same effect and was forced to grovel and shell out a quarter of a million pounds, the *Sun*'s lawyers were gloomy about the prospects for damages if the case ever reached court.

So the paper collapsed. It then begged and wheedled for the apology to be "down-page" on page three, and insisted in the strongest possible terms that the amount paid in settlement by way of damages should be kept a strict secret. The *Eye* (which brought you the true figure for the *Telegraph* settlement) can disclose that the *Sun* dished out well over £1 million.

THE *Sunset Times*'s star columnist A.A. Gill regaled readers a few weeks ago with a piece denouncing fat women.

"I once had a girlfriend who was big," he wrote. "I mean huge... We never went out together, she just lived in between the pub and my digs so I popped in on my way home. What I remember most about her, and there was a lot to remember, was that if the lights were out I had no idea where I was... Fat girls have bits where normal girls don't have places. They have got these odd fleshy wings under their shoulder-blades and foothills under their mountainous bottoms..."

He continued, at some length, with a detailed and unchivalrous description of his ex-girlfriend, before revealing that what finally persuaded him to break up with her was "the wheezing, the fighting for breath".

The woman in question, Tricia Hudson, has a rather different recollection. At the time of her fling with Gill, he was a Cambridge undergraduate and she was the landlady of his local, the King's Head. According to her, the affair ended because "my then husband came upstairs and caught us *in flagrante* at nine o'clock one evening". Naked except for a pair of socks, poor young Gill was pursued by the irate husband through a packed saloon bar, much to the entertainment of the assembled drinkers.

She has written a letter to the *Sunset Times* pointing out this significant omission from Gill's story. Strangely, it has not been printed.

VETERAN *Daily Mirror* hacks were amused to read in the last *Eye* how the paper's motor-racing correspondent Ted Macauley covered grand prix meetings from the comfort of his television set in Oldham.

Macauley's supposed eyewitness account of Ayrton Senna's death — "Yesterday I saw the tragedy all over again" — jogged some particularly fond memories. For, it transpires, Macauley has a proud history of covering major events *in absentia*.

Back in 1967 he spent weeks in the Lake District watching the late Donald Campbell trying to break the world water speed record in his boat Bluebird. Like many hacks, Macauley became bored with getting up as early as 6am every day to write that nothing had happened.

Needless to say, when Campbell was killed in an early morning crash, the *Mirror* man was nowhere to be seen. His Coniston-based drinking colleagues discovered that he was sleeping off the previous night's tinctures a dozen miles away in a pub. When they got him on the phone to inform him of the accident, he blurted: "I know, I've just heard it on the radio."

Despite having missed the big moment, Macauley managed to write a moving first-hand account of Campbell's death for the next morning's *Mirror*. It was headed: TEN SECONDS OF HORROR I WILL NEVER FORGET.

THERE is serious concern about the mental health of Nigel Pratt-Dumpster, the *Daily Mail* diarist, as he rages against the treachery of colleagues at Associated Newspapers.

Hacks are counting the days until early June when his deputy Adam Helliker and assistant Janet King depart for the *News of the Screws*, while his other assistant, Kate Sissons, is taking a three-week holiday in Pakistan before dragging Dumpster in front of an industrial tribunal.

Not a single suitable hack has applied for the job as Dumpster's deputy, and the ghastly prospect is emerging that he might actually have to do some work himself to earn his daily fee of £650 for attendance in the office (work it out for yourselves!) A junior news hackette has been doing shifts for him, and there are even rumours that Dumpster will welcome Tim Satchell back for shift work (having sacked him from the column in the early 1980s after barely a day).

But there is a greater long-term threat to Dumpster's peace of mind than the burden of full-time work. A leading publisher has offered a titled freelance hack a substantial book advance to write an unexpurgated, unofficial biography of the diarist. The hack has found that, for some extraordinary reason, several of those who worked for Dumpster over the years (Neil Mackwood, Alison Miller, Richard Mineards, Richard Lay, John Stonborough and even Helliker himself) have kept diaries or detailed notes of his daily ravings.

OBN

ANDREW NEILL's departure from the *Sunset Times* provoked an orgy of brown-nosing from other newspapers.

"He's a one-off and we should greatly regret his move," Peter McHackey wailed in the *Evening Standard*, consoling himself with the certainty that Brillo Pad's new TV show in New York "will be a huge success". "Is a wee knighthood out of the question before he leaves us?" McLie wondered.

In *The Times*, Brian MacArthur was equally effusive. "On television Neil is a natural," he gushed. "Quick-thinking, fluent and combative, his personality swells on screen..." MacArthur went on to praise the way in which Brillo had "stamped his authority" on the *Sunday Times*: "His staff learnt to respect his 'supreme intelligence', the sharpness of his intellect, his demonic energy and his independent spirit."

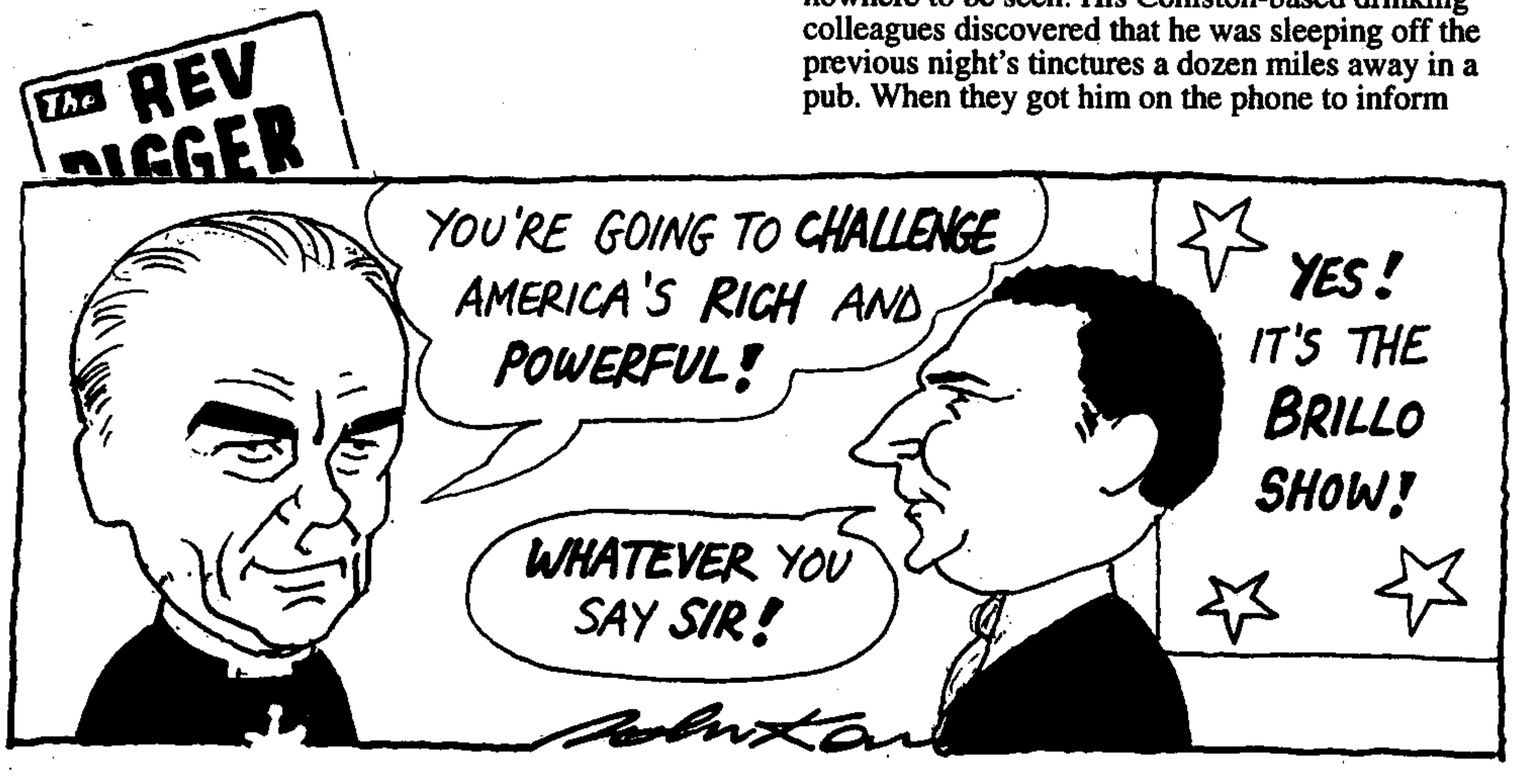
Oddly, McHackey and MacArthur neglected to mention one small fact: they are both beneficiaries of Neil's largesse, having been employed by him at the *Sunset Times*. Would a wee declaration of interest be out of the question?

JUST FANCY THAT

HAS anyone noticed the amazing similarity between the *Eye*'s splendid Fantasy Government feature which appeared in February — and the pathetic imitation in the *Spectator* which didn't? (It limped out two months later.)

At the end of last month Simon Heffer, deputy bore of the *Spectator*, announced a fantasy league politics contest inviting readers to guess who would be in the cabinet by the end of the year.

It got short shrift in the *Guardian*'s recent fantasy league of fantasy leagues, a round-up of all the pathetic league variations in the *meejah*: minus 110,000 points, in fact, including minus 20,000 for originality. (Not that the *Guardian* can talk: it claimed the *Spec* had stolen the idea from an April Fool item in the *Graun*, which itself was a blatant copy of the *Eye*.)



HALLO!

The new heartwarming column by *'The Marquesa'*

HALLO! CONGRATULATIONS to Freddie Forsyth, whose carefully researched novel *The Fist of God* has gone to number one in the bestseller list.

As ever, he was given privileged access to the likes of Mossad, MI6, the CIA, Saddam Hussein and, in particular, our own SAS, to whom the book is dedicated. Such sources are only too willing to confide in leading experts in military affairs and international espionage such as Freddie.

Last year, though, there were puzzled faces at another of his works that contained sensitive information about the IRA, RUC and MI5, apparently gleaned from visits the author made to Belfast and his secret meetings there with key players.

Some felt it was slightly odd that his SAS hero caught a British Airways flight from Gatwick to Belfast (they actually leave from Heathrow), and others were surprised by the scene in which customs officers carried out spot checks on passengers there. No customs check exists for this domestic UK flight.

HALLO! *WE FINALLY catch up with Pakistan's beautiful Benazir Bhutto over canapés at a party to celebrate the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in South Africa.*

Later, sightseeing from the back of her luxury limousine, Benazir talks frankly about the horrors of the townships. And it was her loathing of injustice, she says, that caused her to parade publicly the huge fleet of Mercedes cars that her hated political rival in Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, had bought with taxpayers' money.

A tragedy, then, that she should fall foul of politically-inspired malcontents in the press who reveal that she herself has just acquired a new Merc and has completely forgotten to pay import duty on it.

Oh, man. The blecks have got all the jobs... we'll never be able to get good servants any more, the ANC are all communists...
SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE WHINE

HALLO! ANOTHER glamorous cocktail party — this time at the luxury Heathrow car park where American John Bryan, the Duchess of York's close financial adviser, had trouble with his bill.

Afterwards, an enigmatic gentleman telephones Hallo! claiming to have information on the motor car Mr Bryan was driving. A police check on it, he said, revealed that it was registered to none other than the Buckingham Palace car pool!

Nonsense, we say, telling him not to waste our time but to try the *Sun* instead.

HALLO! **EVE POLLARD, larger than life star of TV's celebrity interiors show, *Through the Keyhole*, is rushed off her feet, she tells The Marquesa over cleavage (*Shurely "lunch"?*)**

For the time being she still has a demanding part-time job — editing the *Sunday Express* newspaper — on top of which she and husband Sir Nicholas Lloyd have recently acquired a luxury £400,000 home in the South of France.

Allowed an exclusive peak through its rustic keyhole, Hallo! can confirm that it needs a lot of work before Lady Lloyd can safely park her magnificent embonpoint under its eaves. Happily, as an expert in getting things done, the free-thinking Eve has found a splendid way to find ideas to turn it a celebrity home.

She has told her chief feature writer Jenny Nisbet to ask half a dozen top interior designers how they would transform a notional £400,000 property in the South of France — all in the interests of a splendid "feature" for *Sunday Express* readers in the paper's section three.

Sadly, some designers have reacted bitchily to Nisbet's patter, claiming that no *Sunday Express* reader has a cat's chance in hell of owning a £400,000 home in the South of France. "Believe it or not," Nisbet boasts, "a lot of our readers are very big earners and have properties in the South of France."

"How rich?" asked one incredulous designer.

HALLO! TO THE premiere of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* where *that* dress — the safety pin-bedecked bosom enhancer worn by Hugh Grant's current poppet, Elizabeth Hurley — steals the show.

Sadly, Hallo! is lost in the throng surrounding Ms Busty and misses the fine creation worn by Ms Debbie McGee, the very famous wife of the television magician Paul Daniels. But no matter. Mr Daniels' publicity office had already faxed full details of the frock to the Marquesa.

"Debbie McGee will arrive wearing her wedding dress in which she married Paul Daniels. As the dress was created by a team that designs and makes costumes for film and TV it is more than appropriate for the occasion. She will be in a Bentley, decorated for the wedding, with the registration number MAG1C... Debbie should arrive at the theatre at approximately 7.30pm."

Publicist Mario Ward wasn't taking any chances: even the film editor of the *Times* — the *Hendon Times* that is — received the fax. But why bother? Everyone knows what famous Debbie looks like... don't they?

"Smoking, Non-Smoking or Loud American?"

HALLO! *SEARCHING through the firearms magazine Handgunner for Christmas present ideas, we spy an amusing item involving our thirsty chum Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, Tory MP for Perth and Kinross.*

Nicky has instructed his solicitors to threaten libel proceedings against the magazine, which last December described him as being "monstrously hung over" during a Commons defence select committee meeting.

This is not the first time Nicky's Commons performance has been criticised (a socialist once described him as "swaying in a non-existent breeze") and Handgunner's response has been bullish.

In its current edition, it responds: "We did not state that Sir Nicholas was in fact nursing a hangover on the morning in question, but rather that that condition appeared to us the most likely explanation for his speech and manner...

"Sir Nicholas — he will correct us if we are mistaken — is not widely known as a non-drinker. Perhaps he is one of those people who, albeit stone sober, none the less gives the impression of being a bit weather-beaten, as the old phrase has it... it certainly does not, in our experience, interfere with his parliamentary duties." Of course not.

HALLO! **WHEN the Conservative whips come out in force a good time is had by all — but not, alas, by amiable Michael Brown, whose resignation as a government whip has sparked so much unpleasantness in the gutter press.**

But we were confused by a missive from Conservative Central Office purporting to give a full list of government whips in the Commons and Lords.

Dated 6 May, Mr Brown's name was not among them, even though he did not resign from his post until the *News of the World* published its muck-raking item two days later, on 8 May. Curious, no?

HALLO! *THE MARQUESA's unbridled admiration for Lady Thatcher was vindicated again during the great woman's tour of Brazil.*

After all, she only charged $100,000 an appearance — an eloquent riposte to those who accuse her of money-grubbing — and she was big-hearted enough to be able to go back on sacred principles when to do otherwise would have caused offence.

A stickler for individual initiative and non-dependence on the state, Lady Thatcher showed great initiative herself when offered free transport by the state airforces of Brazil and Chile, en route from Sao Paolo to Santiago via Brasilia. She said, er, yes please.

Before socialist nonentities and Hoover users bleat that there's no such thing as a free flight, they should remember that in poor countries like Brazil and Chile it would have been very rude to have declined the offer — especially to the taxpayers who payed for the flights.

AMID the tidal wave of sentimentality that poured from politicians' mouths after the regrettable death of John Smith — an erstwhile chum of Lord Gnome's, as it happens — few put their foot in it with more élan than Paul Howell, the Tory MEP for Norfolk.

As if anyone could give a toss what he thinks, Howell rushed out a five paragraph press release grandly revealing that the grief-stricken Euro MP had stopped campaigning for the Euro elections at 1pm on the day of Mr Smith's death — and "would not campaign again until tomorrow". Big deal.

Howell then made matters much worse when he explained why he could not campaign. "I found it impossible to put any heart into it," said the MEP who is clearly as dim as his unfortunate choice of words.

NICHOLAS SCOTT, minister for the disabled, may have deceived his followers, lied to parliament and be reviled by his fearless daughter, but he's lost none of his nerve.

Within minutes of admitting to the Commons that he had lied to MPs about his role in killing the bill to help the disabled, Scott pitched up on the terrace for a tea and scones reception in aid of the National Deaf Children's Society to tell them how much he cared.

SCOTT, a minister who has cultivated a reputation as a wet while doing all the government demanded, follows a modest tradition.

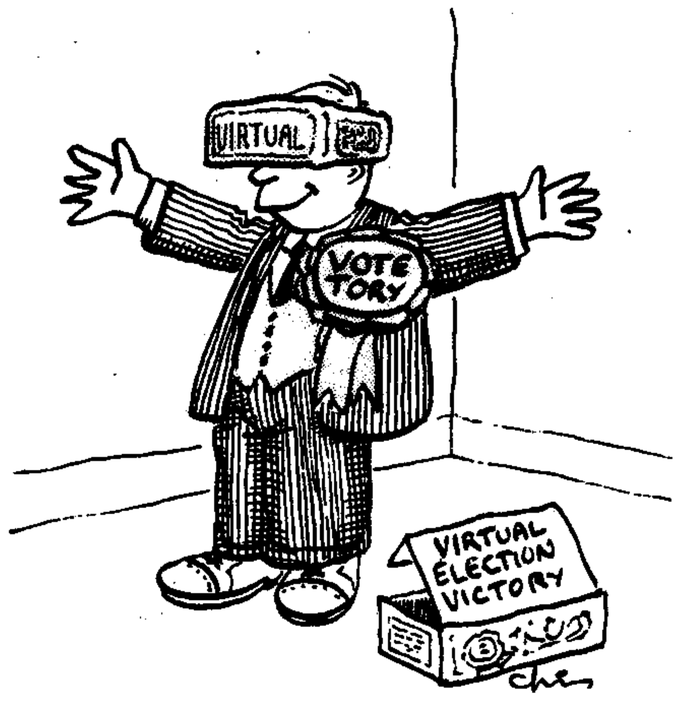
First there was Peter Walker, who told the miners how well they would do if only they stopped their strike — and then became a director of British Gas and helped destroy what was left of the mining industry.

Another is David Hunt, who voted against the Thorp plutonium factory at Sellafield when a Labour government proposed building it... and then became a junior minister at the department of energy enthusiastically supporting the programme to expand nuclear power. Now he is employment secretary he tries to persuade the unions that he did not really support all the anti-union legislation he voted for.

TORY voters, many with flats in Docklands valued at sums not unadjacent to £500,000, came out strongly for Labour in the Millwall ward of Tower Hamlets in the council elections.

They were clearly impressed by Labour's campaign slogan, thought up for them by Labour's Frank Dobson MP: "BNP = Negative Equity".

"I'm glad not to be in Opposition"



IT'S NOT hard to see how Denis MacShane, Labour's victor in the Rotherham by-election, managed to slash the party's 17,000 majority to less than 7,000 and convince 56 percent of the voters to stay at home.

As MacShane jetted from his home in Geneva to Rotherham at the beginning of the campaign, his main preoccupation was what tie to wear.

Local activists were astonished on the first day to see that he had chosen a Dennis-the-Menace tie as befitting the local oiks. When they protested, MacShane turned up in a Donald Duck tie and then in a Pink Panther tie.

After the result was announced MacShane made it clear he'd like a fortnight's holiday. He was scornfully reminded that Parliament was sitting and he was now being paid to oppose the government, forgo holidays and set up home in sunny Rotherham.

DEMOCRACY may be alive and well in South Africa, but Halifax is a different story.

Alice Mahon, the local Labour MP, was surprised while canvassing in the local elections when a young man opened his front door and said he would not be voting.

"But black people in South Africa have waited 350 years for the vote and are standing in queues in the blazing heat for hours," responded the diminutive and demure Ms Mahon.

"I don't care if they fucking fry, missus. I'm not voting," came the reply.

THE battle to succeed Roy Hattersley in Birmingham Sparkbrook is becoming ludicrous: more than 1,000 council rubbish skips are now littering the local streets.

Sparkbrook of course is being merged with Birmingham Small Heath, home of the notorious Roger Godsiff; and he is desperate to curry local favour now that one-member-one-vote has destroyed his union power base.

Godsiff has recruited city councillor Gulbahar Khan to find him lots of would-be voters. And Khan quickly found that what the small tradesmen and would-be voters of Small Heath/Sparkbrook wanted most was free council skips to dump their rubbish.

So far he has ordered 215 skips in the last year — with Labour party literature reminding members of this and many other favours that Khan/Godsiff can bestow. But his rivals, supporters of Councillor Muhammad Afzal, have cottoned on — with Coun Abdul Malik ordering 86 and Abdul Rashid 109.

Cost to Birmingham's hard-pressed council taxpayers last year: £25,000.

AS LABOUR and Conservative activists drove round the Manningham area of Bradford on polling day yelling out the names of their candidates, voters were a little confused.

As the respective cars came within earshot, the following electoral message was heard: "Vote Hussein — Labour"; "Vote Hussein — Conservative"; "Vote Hussein — Labour"; "Vote Hussein — Conservative". And so on.

LABOUR's caretaker leader, Margaret Beckett, showed her mettle recently when the Commons' Strangers Bar resounded to her rich and earthy language.

She was fending off criticisms from another Labour MP of the distaff persuasion about the shortlist the party's national executive committee had drawn up for the by-election in Bradford South, following the death of Bob Cryer.

The complaint was that Beckett, along with MPs Hilary Armstrong, John Evans and Tom Sawyer, formerly of Nupe, had drawn up a shortlist which excluded not only people with brains and principles, but also local people.

Of the six on the shortlist, only Coun Gerry Sutcliffe speaks a language the locals would understand. The others are what used to be called yuppies. Bob Cryer's son, who was supported by one-third of the constituency, was excluded; but Maureen O'Mara, the former women's officer at Nupe and one-time right handmaiden of Tom Sawyer *was* shortlisted.

THE "independence" of Britain's energy regulators was finally exposed as a sham after the department of trade and industry, which appoints them, held a joint press conference last week with Ofgas.

Tim Eggar, energy minister, actually sat side by side with Clare Spottiswoode, the regulator of the gas monopoly, to explain why they both agreed about the future of gas. They issued a joint "consultation document", and anyone who wants to comment on it must write to both the DTI and Ofgas.

Originally, privatised utilities were to have an independent regulator to represent the public interest. But the regulator is appointed by the government and is not answerable to the public, so the industries are still controlled by a government appointee and run in accordance with treasury ideas.

While it has often appeared that the regulators saw themselves more as defenders of their industries than of the public good, the joint appearance and publication by the DTI and Ofgas was the first formal acknowledgment that this is still a government-run utility — and that the only thing "set free" is the profit margin.

'Backbiter'

UN NEWS

IN THE United Nations security council, the French have almost succeeded in persuading the Americans to bomb the Bosnians in defence of Serbian ethnic cleansing.

Muslim forces are pressing hard on the town of Broko, which the Serbs took and ethnically scoured at an early stage of the war. The town sits aside the four-mile wide corridor that links the Serb-occupied territories in Bosnia. French diplomats, playing upon the demonstrable naivety of the Americans, are on the verge of having the Serbian redoubt declared a "safe area" and threatening air strikes against the Bosnians if they do not withdraw — thus consolidating the Serb invasion supply lines. It would at least formalise the way most UN forces have operated.

In a similar unbiased way, members of the Rwandan military government have been haunting the corridors of the UN in New York — having been refused entry to Brussels and Washington for their demonstrable complicity in the pogroms which have so far killed some 200,000 civilians.

Apparently, their last act before leaving Kigali was to urge temporary restraint on their followers — at least for the period during which the UN human rights commissioner, Jose Ayalo Lasso, is in the country.

But the UN is not always so promiscuous in its invitations to headquarters. Recently the organisation revoked the press credentials of five New York-based correspondents for Taiwanese news agencies. It seems those wonderful people who gave us the Tiananmen square massacre had again been successful in foisting their somewhat skewed view of the freedom of the press on the servile UN.

NOOKS and CORNERS

HERE is a tale for our times: an inspiring story of the transcendant civilising influence of what Mrs Thatcher eloquently described as "our great car economy".

It concerns Layerthorpe in York, a street just outside the historic walls of that heritage city. What has happened there shows how the past and the future have to be balanced; how an interest in history and old buildings is all very well but we have to live in the real world where we have to pull our weight in Europe... and make money.

Of course it's very nice that pedestrians can walk around the olde worlde streets of touristic York, but it is more important that we have more and more cars on more and more roads to connect our historic cities. And if car exhaust is now causing more damage to the stonework of York Minster than centuries of weather, that is a necessary sacrifice.

Layerthorpe was once a street of boring, ordinary terraced houses. Now it is a glittering spectacle of car parks, car dealers and scrap yards. There are a few buildings left from the 1830s — such as the former Bridge Inn — but the authorities are ensuring that they will soon be swept away.

The only remaining obstacle to progress is the John Bull Inn; a pub in the merrie England half-timbered style built in 1937 to replace a pub of the 1820s. It was designed by Sir Bertram Wilson, chief architect of John Smith's brewery. It may not be great architecture, but it is a good example of a particular type and has not been tarted up internally. This makes it rare and special. More important, perhaps, it is a flourishing free house, without juke-boxes or games machines or television. It will close on 31 May and then be demolished.

The John Bull has closed once before, in 1978, when the landlord

died. John Smith was then uninterested in running it and sold it to a man of our times, Mr Peter Turnbull, who intended to demolish it eventually to expand the forecourt of his car sales business. In the event, however, he leased it in 1982 to Mr Neville Hobson, who has made the John Bull into such a roaring success. But now Mr Turnbull has called "time, gentlemen please". The repossessed John Bull, once demolished, will open up space in front of the magnificent new car showroom he built last year. And, besides, if he decides to sell the whole site for redevelopment, no developer will want a working pub in the way.

"The motor business comes first, and that comes above all else," announces Mr Turnbull in ringing tones that Lady Thatcher would applaud. Oddly enough, when he bought the car business back in 1990 — having sold it in the booming '80s — he said that "the future of the John Bull is now secure". Since then the local MP, York city council's planning committee, local and city councillors, CAMRA and 3,600 signatories to a petition have all asked him to make the John Bull really secure. The answer has been a deafening silence. Mr Turnbull does not even reply to his own customers who have written to him about the pub.

Peter Turnbull is a representative of Mazda UK, and his car dealing business is called Turnbull's Mazda. So we have a traditional English pub, named after that stout symbol of Englishness, John Bull, being replaced by a business flogging Japanese cars to New Brits. Such is the inspiring state of the New Britain that Mrs Thatcher and the Conservative party have reduced us to. Is this a parable of our times?

ANOTHER story of our times is the sad fate of St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, in the City of London.

This is a useless medieval relic which was badly damaged by an IRA bomb last year: a heaven-sent opportunity, as far as the diocese of London is concerned, for the site can now be given over to Mammon.

As the Templeman report recently claimed, there are far too many old churches in the City anyway, so St Ethelburga's should be sold. However, tiresome sentimentalists think the building should be restored, perhaps as a memorial to victims of terrorism everywhere, or at least so as not to award the IRA a victory. For it is clear that the building was not as extensively destroyed as first thought.

The Friends of St Ethelburga's have launched a campaign, as "to demolish this medieval church and sell the land for development is compounding the initial crime against the citizens of the City of London". But they are no match for the canny diocese.

Over the May day weekend, a JCB mechanical digger was sent in to the ruins and scooped up all the rubble rather than let anyone carefully sift through it. This digger also succeeded in smashing the church's stone floor, as well as crushing pieces of medieval masonry and other potentially interesting fragments. And as the rubble contained pieces of panelling, pews and screens, much of which had been designed by Sir Ninian Comper, this bold action ensured that these can now never be pieced together to recreate the interior of this lovely and harmless little church.

The archdeacon of London, the Venerable George Cassidy, must be proud to have achieved what the Great Fire, the Luftwaffe and even the IRA failed to do. Well done Mammon!

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

[Susan] Wicke is writing in a special three-dimensional ink the rest of us are denied access to.

IAN McMILLAN
New Generation Poets promotion

One window overlooked the wondrous sight of English countryside, rolling hills and a lake, the other had an uninterrupted view of my Ferrari.

MICHAEL WINNER
Sunday Times

Robin and I set about decorating the yurt. We had brought the rugs which usually hang in my study to put on the lattice which forms the walls. It's extremely comfortable in here. I have a little table, some folding chairs and a tape recorder so that I can listen to Gregorian chants in the evening.

BEL MOONEY
Daily Mail

I, too, can claim to be, in some sense, an exile from Sarajevo, even though it is a city I do not know.

There is a Sarajevo of the mind, an imagined Sarajevo whose ruination and torment exiles us all... if that city is lost, then we are all its refugees. If the culture of Sarajevo dies, then we are all its orphans.

SALMAN RUSHDIE
Guardian

CONTRIBUTORS: Anon, J.E.S., A. Non, T. Pope, E. McGaul, S. Perman.

£10 paid for entries

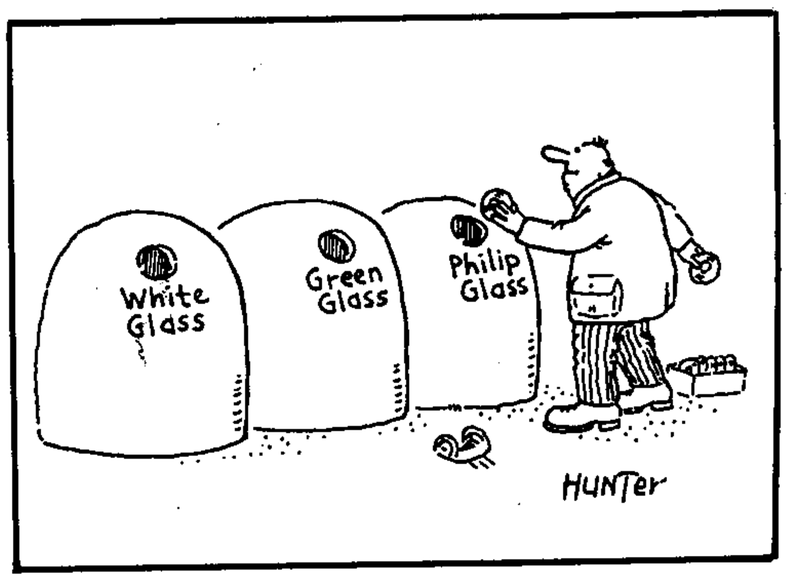
The photographers in the exhibition use vastly different means to address class not so much as the subject of their art but as that which informs their images; Geoff Weston's photographs of pools of vomit outside various pubs in Newcastle connect ideas about class, a crisis in masculinity and Abstract Expressionism.

'Renegotiations', Zone gallery, Newcastle

He hid himself behind a wall of hair and sunglasses; already committed to drugs for pleasure, he took them to obliterate himself.

In this light, his last few days can be seen as a terrible refusal — by walking off the face of the earth, [Kurt] Cobain attained the invisibility that he craved. The method of death reinforced this refusal.

JON SAVAGE
Observer Magazine



EYE TV

The Big Fight
(ITV)

THESE are difficult days for television sport. This area of the medium essentially consists of the visual grammar of light entertainment — men in jazzy jackets introducing bits of fun — crossed with the language of news — "tragedy", "heartbreak", "desperate eleventh hour attempt", "despair" — but with the words applied to minor pieces of bad fortune.

In the past two weeks, though, death — real "tragedy", actual "despair" — has intruded into sport, with the fatal accidents of the racing drivers Senna and Ratzenburger, the boxer Stone, and the jockey Steve Wood, along with at least three serious injuries in the same sports.

How to deal with fatalities in the house of fun? Over on Radio 5 Live, the rolling sports and news service, games jock John Inverdale has taken to delivering little sermons on "the tragic price sportsmen sometimes pay for our entertainment". On the day of Ayrton Senna's death, BBC television summoned its chief motor racing commentator, Murray Walker, live on to the *Six O'Clock News* to discuss safety and implications.

Followers of sport's capacity for avoiding reality, however, were keenly awaiting the first big televised boxing bout since the death of Bradley Stone. It came last Wednesday night: the WBO middleweight championship, between Steve Collins and Chris Pyatt, live on ITV.

Would Jim Rosenthal, hosting from ringside, make an Inverdalian reference to "the tragic price sportsmen sometimes pay for our entertainment"? Would he bollocks! More than most sports — except, perhaps, snooker — boxing is virtually a collaboration between the fight industry and the television industry. The size of the purse and the sale of the broadcasting rights are interdependent. The boxers and the box are glove brothers, so TV wasn't going to spoil it all by mentioning the D-word.

"Ello, good evenin' and welcome to ya", said Rosenthal, who used to speak BBC English in his Radio 2 days but now drops 'is vowels ringside for ITV. Rosenthal interviewed the boxer, here TV expert, Lloyd McKenzie.

"A pretty evens stevens fight, Jim, if you know what I mean," said McKenzie. "This is his third title defence, if you like, on the crest of a wave..."

All boxers turned commentators now bifurcate clichés with the phrase "if you know what I mean" in homage to Frank Bruno who made it famous.

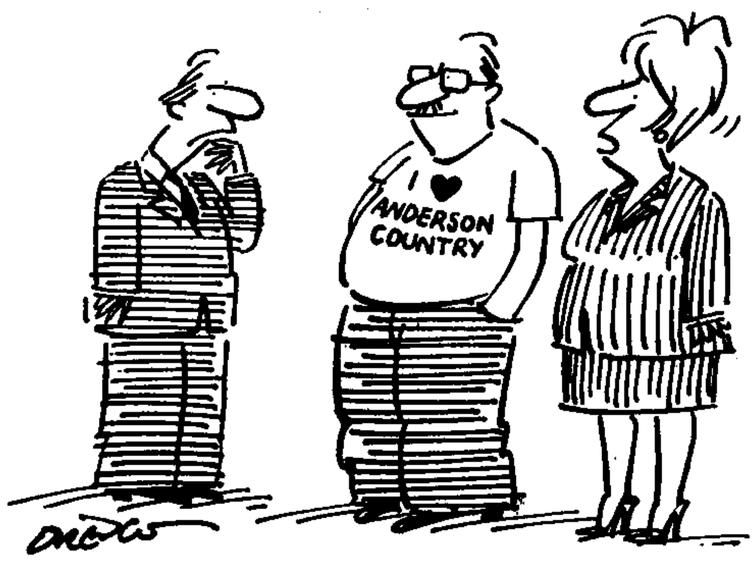
This rare bit of boxing wit — a fight sponsored by a maker of floor covering — went unacknowledged. The fight began. On the mat beneath the boxers' feet were the logos of the television companies. Commentators Reg Gutteridge and Jim Watt took over. Reg is a chirpy cockney and Watt a dour Scot, so their commentaries resemble a double-act between Arthur Daley and Taggart.

"They're great genuine pros these boys, Jim?"

"Aye."

In the fifth round, Pyatt was pinned on the ropes, taking blow after blow from Collins. The referee stopped the fight. To the casual observer, it was obvious that, though the ref had perhaps been over cautious, he was mindful of Bradley Stone, buried last week. Did Gutteridge and Watt make this point? Did they bollocks! In fact, Watt was severely pissed off with the official.

"I dinna know if aye'd have stopped it, Reg. Not enough of those punches were really hitting



"Norman has always been a bit of a non-conformist!"

"Steve Collins — we were wondering if he'd come in with a bit of a beard — but he's clean-shaven," said Rosenthal, resorting to facial hair analysis to fill the time.

The fighters were poised. So close is the relationship between television and boxing that presenter Rosenthal effectively handed over coverage to the official fight MC.

"Welcome," he said, "to the fabulous Ponds Forge sports centre in the city of Sheffield..." the fight, he explained, was "sponsored by Paul Eyre Carpets, the UK's largest independent carpet manufacturer..."

home. All right, he was wobbling, but he's a pro... He's in trouble, okay, but it's a world title fight..."

Then the cameras were on the winner. A man stepped in front of him, and stared into his eyes. "That's the doctor," chirped Reg, "even the winner they've got to check — just make sure they're okay..."

And did he — even at this obvious cue — mention Stone? Did he bollocks! Boxing had closed ranks again, and ITV Sport stood shoulder to shoulder with it.

'Square Eyes'

BIRT SPEAK

THE BBC may not be able to afford pay rises for its staff, but it seems to have limitless funds available to promote the use of Birtspeak as the corporation's *lingua franca*.

The latest extravagance is *Time For Training*, a lavishly-produced, 50-page brochure sent out to every BBC TV employee. It lists all the courses being organised at the licence-payers' expense by the corporation's equal opportunities department.

One course, excitingly titled "Departmental Development Programme: 1994-1995 Pilot", aims to "give managers frameworks from which to develop fair strategic and proactive responses to new demands on them and their staff" and "examine and clarify new roles within the new BBC TV context".

MEDIA NEWS

CLOD-hopping television critic Garry Bushell has been going into ecstasies over Brian Conley's new comedy show for ITV.

"The show was a smash," he slobbered in last Wednesday's *Sun*, "and a step closer to the genuine variety format TV bosses will eventually revive."

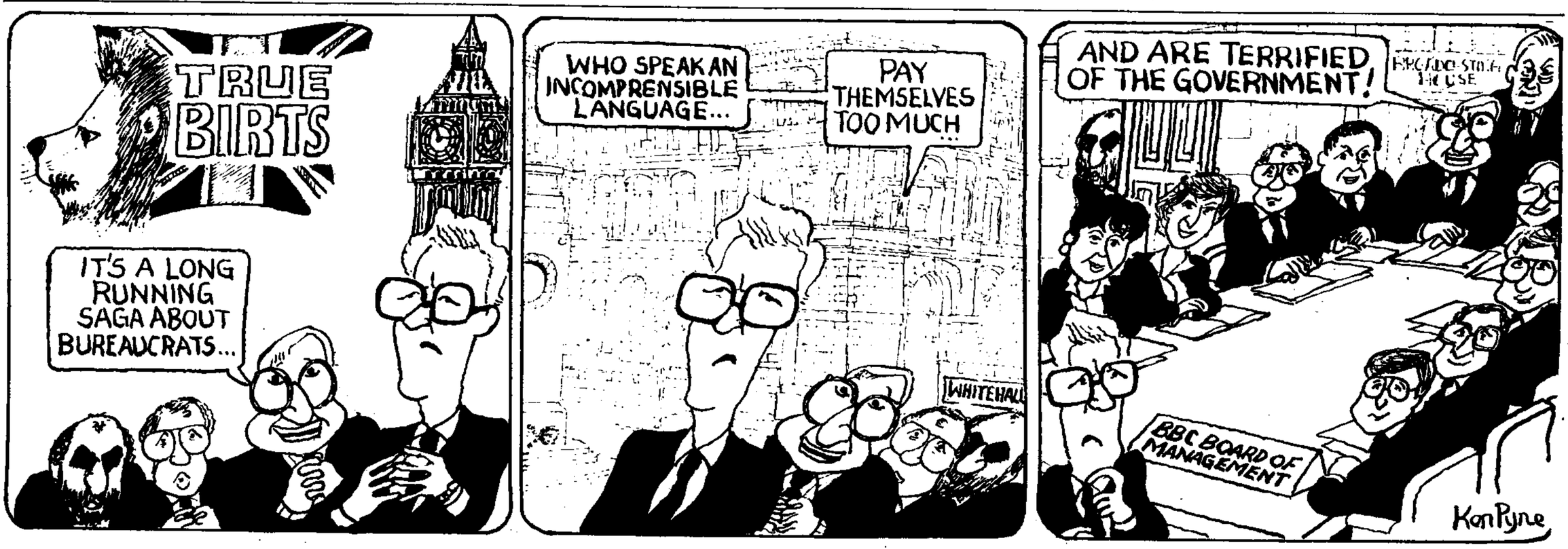
Oddly, he neglected to mention that Conley's team of gag-writers for this brilliant new series includes a certain G. Bushell.

FROM his glory days at Thames, David Elstein has been reduced to being chief apologist for Rupert Murdoch's brand of television.

Taking a break from commissioning all that original drama and high quality entertainment with which Sky One has become synonymous, Elstein complains (see Letters) that the *Eye*'s obsession with BSkyB means his station's commitment to rigorous censorship has been overlooked.

Well, yes, BSkyB has indeed selected its own path through the bewildering regulatory maze. But the point of the story was that some people might think it a bit odd that the *Sun* (which has just occasionally been known to promote the virtues of satellite dish ownership) should demand that a whole range of videos be banned when BSkyB was simultaneously broadcasting the same material, albeit in modified form.

Still, it's interesting to learn that BSkyB is after all a "British broadcaster". Some people thought that because its programmes are transmitted via the Luxembourg-based Astra satellite consortium, BSkyB was exempt from the restrictions which, for example, prevent Lord Rothermere from expanding his television interests or stop British Telecom moving into broadcasting. Obviously not.



PITY the *Late Show* staff who worked on the recent tribute to James Kelman, the mad Scots writer who is known for his hatred of anything English — and for the absurd deference extended to him by English critics.

The *Late Show* programme was conceived by BBC Glasgow in the hope that Jim wouldn't think he was the victim of the usual English conspiracy. However, by a ghastly mischance the person who took his first telephone call turned out to be English. She had to be replaced for a week, and someone with a more appropriate accent was drafted in.

Kelman's paranoia did not stop there. When the director asked if he would consent to being filmed walking down the street in which he lives, Kelman agreed — but on condition that no one else appeared in the film: only an empty street would do.

Why? Because, Jim explained, we live in a police state which is eager to locate and monitor subversives. If he allowed his neighbours to be filmed, the BBC would undoubtedly turn the tapes over to the police.

BBC radio's thrusting md Liz "Jolly Hockey Sticks" Forgan is achieving her goal of unprecedented audience figures.

Fresh from helping Matthew Bannister lose millions at Radio 1, Forgan turned her attention to the nascent Radio 5. After a shaky launch it increased its reach by a splendid 47 percent, albeit from a low base.

Ratings for children's programmes were particularly strong, an embarrassment for Forgan as she presided over the expensive transformation from a youth and sport network to a rolling news and sport format.

Now, just weeks after the relaunch, internal research shows Radio 5 is dropping listeners at a speed even Radio 1's Danny Baker can't match. Afternoon programming is particularly unpopular, but almost all the rolling news (ie endlessly repeated stories from local radio stations) has been rejected.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

IN THE row over London orchestras, why has the role of Clive Gillinson, chairman of the Association of British Orchestras, former LSO cellist and antique-dealer, escaped scrutiny?

When the Arts Council set up the Hoffman inquiry, Gillinson's sole public statement was that he fully supported the council's aims and strategy. Since then, despite pleas for help, his silence on the plight of orchestras in London and the regions has been deafening. Tea and sympathy have been dispensed by his deputy, Libby Macnamara.

Gillinson is perhaps better known as managing director of the LSO — the orchestra that last July was said by the Arts Council to be beyond reproach.

The LSO receives £2.4 million from the council and the City of London — its three rivals make do with less even when all their public grants are added together — and Gillinson's close professional relationship with the previous Arts Council regime of Everitt and Baird appears to have paid off for his orchestra.

Perhaps it also paid off for the Arts Council, who got an ABO chairman who knew on which side his bread was buttered. But to be an effective body, doesn't the independent ABO need a chairman free from such strong vested interests?

As chairman, Gillinson also has a place on Hoffman 2. But the most ominous portent is that the new Arts Council chairman, Lord Gowrie, was himself until recently a board member of the LSO.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

HACKWATCH: CHARLES BENSON

AS "THE SCOUT", Charles Benson was for many years the *Daily Express*'s racing correspondent. Now he is altogether grander, writing a weekly gossip column for the *Sunday Express*.

Not so much a gossip column, actually, as an exercise in name-dropping — the names in question being a few rich racehorse owners and a handful of superannuated film-stars.

Now read on...

17 October: Not for the first time, Benson has been stood up. "I hoped to have dinner on Wednesday night with the delightful Angie Dickinson, who was staying at the Dorchester. But she had to cancel due to obligations connected with her series *Wild Palms*, to be seen on BBC2 next month." Meanwhile, he has been invited to lunch by Lynn Wyatt, mother of Fergie's friend Steve. Unfortunately the lunch "was in Houston", and so he had to miss that too. Still, he did make it to the wedding of Viscount Linley. "For the record," he daringly reveals, "David and Serena Linley are two thoroughly pleasant young people and their wedding reception was as informal and as much fun as such a royal occasion could possibly be.

24 October: A plug for one of Benson's "celebrity" chums, an obscure racehorse owner called Bill Mullins. Mullins, we learn, once "bought a quarter share in a stallion called The Noble Player from Robert Sangster". More excitingly still, he once played in Sangster's "incredibly popular" Pro-Am golf tournament in Barbados.

31 October: Always happy to publicise his friends, Benson turns his attention to Diana Rigg, "our finest actress", who is appearing in a new production of *Medea*. The play suits her particularly well as "it is fairly short, ending early enough to enable her to enjoy dinner at a reasonable time." Hence, he reveals, she was "able to make my small birthday dinner a few days ago, beautifully turned out."

7 November: An extended freebie to Los Angeles, where Benson was due to dine with Tony O'Reilly. Alas, "he was detained on the East Coast". No matter: "My dinner date with Angie Dickinson on Thursday night was a great success." While in California, Benson catches up with his pal Roger Moore: "He has a house here and divides his time, when he is not filming or doing charity work, between LA, Gstaad, the South of France and London." Fascinating!

14 November: Still in Los Angeles, but still dogged by bad luck: "I missed meeting Sharon Stone by about a minute last week. What a disaster."

21 November: Another week in LA, another near-miss. He hopes to visit Roger Moore again, but Moore is ill and cannot receive him.

5 December: Back to Blighty at last, with fulsome thanks for the "first-class service" he had from United Airlines, who paid for his flight. But the news is not all good: "For most of my Los Angeles stay, I failed to catch up with my old friends Michael and Pat York." Never mind. "The Yorks remain one of the genuinely nicest couples in any sphere."

19 December: Another puff for Diana Rigg, still appearing in *Medea*. After the show, "she was relaxed and smartly transformed as she dispensed champagne in her dressing room." Then she was off to a private dinner: "That is the additional attraction of the play for Diana. She can live a relatively normal social life because the one-act classical Greek tragedy only lasts a mere 104 minutes." (*You've done this already. — Ed.*)

26 December: Tomorrow, Benson announces with pride, he will be at Kempton Park as a guest of Andrew and Madeleine Lloyd-Webber, whose new steeplechaser Black Humour will be running. "Andrew bought Black Humour for Madeleine for a six-figure sum as a birthday present when we were all in Los Angeles a month ago."

2 January: Time for a new year's resolution. "One engagement I do not intend to miss this month is the marriage and 50th birthday of the world-renowned bloodstock agent Billy McDonald." The invitation list includes Robert Sangster, Angie Dickinson, Stefanie Powers and Rod Stewart — and, he believes, "most of them will attend".

9 January: "Joan Collins is back in London, bronzed and beautiful as ever." Meanwhile, following Benson's preview of the Billy McDonald wedding, "Billy rang to say that I had forgotten to mention Sean Connery, Michael Caine, Roger Moore and Pierce Brosnan among the invited guests. 'Likely to come, too,' promised Billy."

30 January: Off to Los Angeles again, "where friends of the international bloodstock agent Billy McDonald and Suzie Park were convening for their Vegas wedding on Friday in the chapel at the Treasure Island hotel... Robert Sangster, Britain's top racehorse owner, is best man." The guest list, we are assured, is "star-studded".

6 February: A lengthy report on the Billy McDonald wedding, which "took place in the romantic capital of the world — Las Vegas". Alas, many of the star guests failed to turn up, including George Hamilton — "who, most uncharacteristically for such a party animal, was a no-show". Still, plenty of famous names did attend, such as best man Robert Sangster and "Lady Bell, wife of PR guru Sir Tim Bell".

13 February: *Schindler's List* is about to open in London. "Sadly, I will have to miss that premiere and the party afterwards, the first time I have lost out on a Spielberg London bash for years."

20 February: Our columnist is enjoying the après-ski in Gstaad. "Roger Moore is in top form here — the place he loves — but still devotes a lot of his time to UNICEF duties." Also in town is Moore's son Geoffrey, a singer. "Geoffrey has a wonderful voice," Benson reports, "and is planning to expand his career this summer by completing an album." Super!

27 February: "I've always fancied Julie Andrews. So I was delighted to find her sitting at the next table on my last night in Gstaad." Another celebrity present was that evergreen star, Roger Moore.

6 March: "Rocco Forte gave a small party at the Café Royal in London on Wednesday to celebrate his Grill Room chef's recently awarded Michelin star. Rocco is justifiably proud of this." Among the "interesting group" of guests was Johnny Gold, owner of Tramp nightclub.

3 April: One more puff for an old friend. "Joan Collins is an amazing woman. Not content with her film and television sagas, she writes books and now she has a video out. Secrets of Fitness and Beauty." Collins hosted a lunch party on Monday, where the guests included "Tramp supremo Johnny Gold and a bevy of blonde beauties headed by Sue Sangster... and Sir Tim Bell's wife, Virginia."

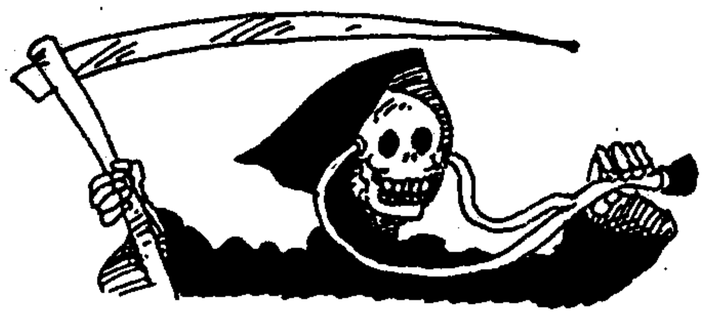
10 April: "Diana Rigg opened on Broadway on Thursday in the spell-binding *Medea*. Sadly for me, she had to cancel our farewell dinner in London because of late rehearsals before flying to New York." This proves the actress's "sheer professionalism".

17 April: A great scoop: "Samantha Baring, 25, who has bought a half-share in Madeleine Lloyd-Webber's clothes company, The Done Thing, hosted a lunch at Newbury races yesterday."

24 April: "I have been here in the South of France for a few days' golf with Robert Sangster while he recharged his batteries before the main racing season."

8 May: "I had a call a few days ago from the gorgeous Stephanie Powers, passing through London," Benson reports. "Stefanie slips very easily into London life at this time of year since she is a great sport and thrives on action." He also finds space to mention that his great friends the Lloyd Webbers "are becoming the most enthusiastic racing couple in Britain". Last week they flew to the States to watch the Kentucky Derby. "As did I," he adds modestly. Well done!

YOUR LOCAL
HANDYMAN
- ALL ELECTRICAL WORKS AND REPAIRS
- SHELVES OR FURNITURE MOUNTED
- CURTAIN RAILS / POLES HANGED



DOING THE ROUNDS

"THE reality of life for your average hospital chief executive is nothing like the popular myth of a £90,000 salary and a luxury Porsche," says a report by the Institute of Health Services Management.

In truth, £60,000 and a Vauxhall Cavalier are nearer the mark, it says. Nevertheless, **Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust** is advertising for a bargain basement chief executive for just £100,000 a year.

The trust comprises the random merging of **Hammersmith, Charing Cross, Queen Charlotte's, Chelsea** and **Acton hospitals**, with the consequent "rationalisation of resources". Top of the hit list is Hammersmith hospital itself, whose disgruntled consultants claim it is "being mugged by intellectual vandals from an incompetent administration".

With 40 professors and the highest score possible for academic excellence, even Sir Bernard Tomlinson recognised the exceptional nature of the Hammersmith. An extensive building programme is nearly completed; a huge new ward block and outpatient centre opened four years ago; and a £20 million filmless X-ray system and £15 million research centre have just opened, with an £8 million cancer centre to follow in the summer. Research grant income is soaring, and the hospital is thriving... What better time to close it and transfer services to Charing Cross?

The complex network of research would certainly not survive a move to what is a forlorn and decaying site, and would in any case be very expensive. A KPMG survey concluded that closing the Hammersmith would cost at least £40 million more than closing Charing Cross — but then the latter is surrounded by three marginal Tory seats. One MP has already pledged that his hospital will not close, but a better decision would have been for Kenneth Clarke, when health secretary, not to have endorsed the ludicrous £240 million **Chelsea and Westminster hospital**, which has 700 underused beds in an area Tomlinson found has 800 too many.

SORRY STATE-MENT

THERE is much egg on face at Leeds general infirmary, where United Leeds teaching hospitals trust chief executive Stuart Ingham has actually said "sorry".

The chief (salary: circa £90,000) has written a grovelling letter of apology to a woman whose husband died in the LGI in December. Mr Ingham admitted a series of cock-ups which included delays in giving the patient nursing care, distressing comments made by staff and a shortage of bedpans.

When the man asked for a bedpan he was told to defecate in his bed and staff would "clean it up later". After he died, his widow was not informed and was left to find out for herself when she arrived at his bedside.

Responding to a complaint from the woman, who worked as a nurse for 25 years, Mr Ingham said the trust had "learned a great deal" from the case. Heads are not expected to roll.

ALL A TERRIBLE MISTAKE...

ENFIELD's Chase Farm hospital sent a subtle letter to GP fundholders last month only offering them immediate access to a consultant at a joint injection clinic. Non-fundholder Dr Brian Geffin, who has to wait four weeks for the privilege, complained so bitterly the offer has been withdrawn on the grounds that it was a "mistake".

● **WEST Glamorgan health authority** is to close 400 hospital beds at **Neath, Port Talbot** and **Groeswen**, and replace them with two primary care centres. Local GPs, who haven't been consulted, predict the resulting delays in diverting casualties and women in labour to Swansea could result in fatalities. As Dr Julian Tudor Hart said: "It's all in the minds of chair-bound boffins. Anyone with any experience at the coal-face thinks it's crazy."

● **NUNEATON hospital** has no medically qualified microbiologists — but this hasn't stopped it offering microbiology services at half the price of local competitors. The hospital has consequently been deluged with specimens and produced results that have had GPs reaching for a second opinion. Meanwhile, a veterinary lab in **Torbay** is offering **Devon** fundholders a cut price service to process human swabs... alongside those of Labradors and the like.

EMBARRASSING FACTS

GLASGOW's Victoria hospital has had such difficulty recruiting house officers it recently employed three Spanish doctors. When they turned up for work it was found that none spoke English, and all were sent on a three-week "holiday" to learn the language. When they returned, they were set the task of understanding their consultant. Two scraped through but one had to return to Spain.

● SICK leave and high staff turnover costs the NHS £180 million a year. Patient complaints about the NHS have risen by 56.7 percent in the first two years of the health reforms.

● The **Leeds**-based **NHS management executive** has just spent £50,000 to change its headed notepaper and stationery. It has dropped the word "management" but so far not the "NHS".

● **SOUTH West Surrey health authority** has awarded a contract to provide care for people with learning disabilities and mental handicap to **Bradford community health trust**, just 220 miles away.

● THE £30 million showpiece **Wansbeck General hospital** in **Ashington** is running into structural difficulties. Windows have fallen out, exterior wall panels have dropped off and errant trolleys have left large holes in the corridor walls.

● A DoH leaflet, *NHS changes in London — answers to the questions you've been asking*, is being delivered to more than three million homes at a cost of £150,000. The DoH has also spent £619,839 sending leaflets to managers in the last six months — the annual cost of 25 junior doctors.

● **FAMILY health services authorities** have taken on more than 1,000 new managers and 12,000 new administrators since 1989, with administration costs rising by 143 percent.

M.D.

SALLY DEEDES

FURTHER proof of the need for a code of practice to tell electricity boards where to stick their meters comes in a letter from Kevin Horsely, Eastern Electricity's media relations manager.

In *Eye* 844, we told how reader Raymond Duffy had complained about the Eastern's positioning of his electric meter above his kitchen sink — contrary to his written instructions. Mr Duffy also resented the £120 charge to reposition the box.

Having canvassed the views of electricity boards and other bodies across the country on the safe siting of meters, most agreed with his supposition that "water and electricity don't mix".

But in a letter to the *Eye*, Mr Horsley said a senior engineering inspector from the department of trade and industry had found the siting of Mr Duffy's meter satisfactory, and that there had been no safety reason to move it. He suggested "placing the meter in a waterproof cabinet, which Eastern Electricity would do free of charge".

But as SWALEC told Mr Duffy only last month: " ...With regard to condensation occurring in a cupboard and becoming in contact with the meter cable terminal ports, the whole damp area could become live. Any person in contact with [the] ground or a tap touching the damp cupboard and surrounding wall area could receive a shock of such magnitude to cause electrocution."

So much for Eastern Electricity's reassurances.

THE LEGAL establishment continues to conspire against Peggy Wood, the 77-year-old litigant who lost her house and land after claiming that the Law Society failed to investigate her complaints properly against a firm of solicitors.

Wood has just lost her appeal against the refusal to grant her legal aid which is crucial for her high court appeal.

The decision was taken by a legal aid area committee consisting of, er, four solicitors — no possible conflict of interest there!

BENT

THE smart money says power will soon change hands in barmy Bent, where Labour and the Liberal Democrats have 33 seats between them, as do the Tories who — having ruled for the two years thanks to Labour defectors — reckon they can retain power on the mayor's casting vote.

It would only take one Tory defector to cause chaos, which is why all eyes are on Manibai Patel, recently elected as a Tory but who was council deputy leader eight years ago for Labour. If Manibai Patel feels no nostalgic twinge to return to the Labour fold, perhaps Nadeem Patel (no relation), the new Tory councillor for Queensbury, might be persuaded. After all, only last year he was on Labour's shortlist of candidates.

One new Labour councillor, Asif Amann, *hasn't* changed party but has changed his name: a *couple* of years ago, before he tried to win election to the council, he was known as Abdul Qayyum.

Could the name change have anything to do with the fact that his estranged wife Abida has signed an affidavit alleging that he has been defrauding the DSS? Of course not.

While she tries to seize his accounts, as well as details of the sale of the matrimonial home, her letter has been circulated in Bent town hall. Various Tory councillors are being threatened with the attentions of Messrs Sue, Grabbit and Runne (Neasden) if they repeat the allegations.

Qayyum/Amann denies them and has engaged m'learned friends to protect his reputation.

KIRKLEES

COUNCIL taxpayers in Kirklees must be very impressed with the lengths their council is going to look after their money.

It has just withdrawn bus passes from a 12-year-old girl and her 14-year-old brother because it found their home was 400 feet short of the required three miles from school — *if* they

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

walk across muddy farmland and down unlit lanes.

The house is easily more than three miles from their school along conventional roads, but the barking council sent its "transport coordinator" to walk across the countryside with a pedometer to find the shorter route.

Will Kirklees councillors now stop claiming fat travelling expenses and trudge across muddy fields to get to meetings? We hope so.

SHEPWAY

IS Shepway council, the local authority at the British end of the Channel tunnel, the most incompetent in Britain?

It seems to have forgotten its obligations to one important group — the blighted souls who live within 300 yards of the tunnel entrance at Cheriton — and now faces an expensive lawsuit.

Until a couple of weeks before the tunnel opening, the residents had no idea that Eurotunnel was willing to buy their blighted houses and to compensate them for their drop in value.

Eurotunnel had told Shepway council this way back in 1987, but the council decided it was for the company to inform residents and so sat on the information for seven years.

The residents only learnt of the offer because a local estate agent leafleted them to find out how much they knew about their compensation entitlement... and discovered they knew nothing. It's now too late for the people of Cheriton to take up Eurotunnel's offer, which was due to run out once the tunnel opened. But they have engaged m'learned friends and are likely to be compensated, to the tune of several hundred thousand pounds, by bloody-minded Shepway council.

MURKEYSIDE

MAKING brass out of muck appeals to Knowsley councillors so much that they've voted a £70,000 start-up loan for a furniture re-cycling business — three of the five people involved in the scheme either being on Knowsley council or related to its councillors.

Both Ted Grannell and Mick Kelly, the councillors, were present at a council meeting when the loan was approved, but they failed to declare an interest.

Chief executive of Knowsley, David Henshaw, said of their business plan: "The council must consider the risks involved and decide whether the enterprise merits the investment, given the possibility that it may be required to write off some or all of the loan if the business fails."

The problem is that recycled furniture must now conform to laws relating to the inflammable material that was stuffed inside sofas and the like prior to 1988. To remove such material would probably cost more than to make new furniture — something of which those accepting the £70,000 loan were not initially aware.

The solution? Sell it to the third world! "It's better than them sitting on orange boxes," said one director of Furniture Action Community Enterprise (FACE), until a fire safety expert pointed out to him the next day that people were less likely to die from sitting on a burning orange box than a foam-filled cheapo settee.

DOWN ON THE FARM

THIS YEAR New Zealand farmers celebrate 10 years without government subsidies. In 1984 nearly 40 per cent of their gross income came from this source: a year later, almost all subsidies had gone and the farmers were on their own.

Today, the farmers are doing well *without* their handouts. They are proud of their achievements and earning a living without interference. Where once farmers were treated with derision or envy by the rest of the nation, there is now respect and even admiration.

Much of the traditional enmity between town and country has gone, and the farmers' independence is fiercely defended by rural people. Farming has become more efficient, profits have been sustained at a comfortable level and there have been significant environmental benefits, particularly in water quality which has improved as wasteful use of fertilisers and pesticides — fuelled by subsidies — has stopped.

By contrast, harassed British farmers were scrambling last week to complete their integrated administration and control system (IACS) forms to claim their over-generous handouts, arranged courtesy of the munificent but insane common agricultural policy (CAP). Thus, at one of the peak times in farming, more time is being spent in farm offices than out on the land.

And when the cheques come in, few will benefit. Despite the system's apparent generosity, farmers are chained to the treadmill of increasing inputs to improve yields from increasingly hard-pressed land to meet the high demands for return on capital engendered by higher land prices — the only longterm financial effect of subsidised farming.

Despite the best efforts of our caring minister of agriculture, the lovable Gillian Shephard, no amount of reform will cure this inherent defect. The only salvation for British farming is to follow the New Zealand lead and abandon subsidies altogether. If that requires leaving the mad*CAP* — or even the increasingly insane EC — so be it.

WHILE the poultry industry has so far escaped subsidy, it has suffered considerable and unwelcome government intervention in the form of salmonella controls. Industry leaders are thus showing more than usual interest in the salmonella food-poisoning figures which, for the first quarter of 1994, are down 6 per cent compared with the same time last year.

Of even greater interest is the fate of the "chicken and egg" strain, *Salmonella enteritidis*, which is showing a net decline of 23 per cent in the same period. This must cause some embarrassment in government circles, occurring as it has on the first anniversary of the abandonment of the compulsory slaughter policy for laying hens: a policy which was intended to bring down salmonella foodpoisoning.

Experts now suggest that we are seeing a reversion to the normal pattern of food poisoning for, as the "chicken and egg" strain decreases, others take its place. The overall effect will be a continuation of the upward trend in food poisoning, leaving the jobsworths at government public health laboratories to pin the blame for the increase on something else.

MEANWHILE, after five years' prevarication, the self-same public health labs have finally agreed to help egg producers trace the reports of "egg associated" food poisoning investigations which have been notified since the beginning of 1988.

This is assistance which so far they have steadfastly refused to give — a change of heart prompted by the government's new code of practice on access to government information.

But rejoicing is premature. The labs have only agreed to seek *agreement* from the local authorities who did the investigations as to whether they are prepared to have their names released so they can be asked for information directly. There is no guarantee the authorities will agree, or that they would release material if approached.

For this "service" the avaricious labs will charge between £2,000 and £3,000. Egg producers who believe wider publication of food-poisoning reports will show how the evidence for the 1988 egg "scare" was cooked have not greeted this move with wild enthusiasm. Freedom of information, it appears, is anything but free.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

THEY'RE VIRMIN FRANK!! THEY COST US FARMERS A BLOODY FORTUNE EVERY YEAR!
MAYBE SO GEORGE! BUT THE LAW STILL SAYS THAT YOU CAN'T GIVE 'EM POISONED MEAT!
ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT!
BETTER PUT IT OUT FOR THE FOXES PET!
V.A.T.

POLICE 5

THE fashionable reaction of police forces caught out prosecuting innocent people is to imply that the convictions were right all along and that courts were too scrupulous.

West Mercia police went down the same road on 13 May after the successful appeal of Eddie Browning, who was wrongly convicted in 1989 for the M50 murder of Marie Wilks.

After the celebrations of the Browning family, West Mercia's deputy chief constable David Thursfield appeared outside the court to tell the world there was "no new evidence" to convince him anyone else was responsible for the murder.

Not everyone will let West Mercia police off so lightly. The family of Marie Wilks, who was stabbed to death after being seized at a motorway telephone where she was phoning for help after her car had broken down, should study the transcript of Lord Chief Justice Taylor's long and comprehensive summing up of the appeal.

Taylor was merciless in his criticism of the police's approach to important evidence. Browning was convicted because two witnesses, and only two, described the murder car as a C-registered Renault 25. Yet when they first approached the police, both witnesses failed to mention the C registration. Both these first approaches had been suppressed by the West Mercia police and withheld from the defence.

One of the witnesses, a police officer, then underwent hypnosis during which, on video, he remembered enough of the registration number specifically to *exclude* Eddie Browning's car number. This session and the video were also suppressed and withheld from the defence.

Superintendent Stanley, second-in-charge of the murder inquiry, had a torrid time in the witness box at the court of appeal. He was, in the lord chief justice's words, "far from frank" about the disciplinary charges he still faces for his role in the "missing video" story. His behaviour in failing to disclose the video, said Lord Justice Taylor, was "very much to be regretted". Taylor did not stop there. He pointed out that there were "large numbers" of West Mercia police officers who knew about the video and its suppression, and suggested that all those who kept mum were at fault.

Others who will not enjoy Taylor's judgment are Stanley's former boss, the swashbuckling head of West Mercia's CID at the time, DCS David Cole. Cole has just brought out a book about his brilliant exploits, which ends with the M50 murder. Called *The Doctor and the Detective*, its co-author is Peter Acland, a home office forensic scientist who, like Cole, does not err on the side of modesty.

Acland will be specially interested in the passage in Lord Taylor's judgment which deals with the lack of blood in Eddie Browning's car when it was seized a week after the murder. Marie Wilks had been stabbed on the motorway, and her jugular vein cut. She was bundled into the car and her head ruthlessly battered. A few minutes later she was thrown out of the car over an embankment.

Taylor was plainly not impressed by Dr Acland's imaginative theory that Marie Wilks staunched the blood from her jugular vein while she was being beaten up in the car. Taylor went to great lengths to repeat that there was no forensic link between Browning's car and the body of Marie Wilks, nor did a single one of the identification witnesses pick him out of a parade (indeed, they all picked out someone else).

When the legal niceties are set aside, the plain fact is that Eddie Browning did not murder Marie Wilks. Someone else did, and may well be still at large. Instead of pouting and sulking in public, West Mercia police would be better advised to shut up and find the killer.

Letters

Poll plot

Sir,

I just went to vote in the local elections, and I was shocked to find that Nelson Mandela's name was not on the ballot paper.

I complained about this blatant ballot-rigging but got no satisfactory explanation. These elections are far from being "free and fair", as I was prevented from voting for my chosen candidate.

Mr Mandela is the only man who can steer this great country away from the mess left by 15 years of white, right-wing minority rule.

Yours sincerely,
A. HOTSTON,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

Crash course

Sir,

Your cartoon based on the sad tragedy of the deaths of two brave racing drivers was sick, in appalling bad taste and typical of the trash that pervades your pathetic perverse organ.

Keep up the good work and please renew my subscription.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN W. GORDON,
Northwich, Cheshire.

Cross words

Sir,

How one-eyed can you get?

How can you expect us to cut out and send off the crossword when it's on the back of what has to be one of the last Diaries of John Major?

Yours in black and white,
ROS READER,
Romsey, Hants.

Padding

Sir,

In the leader column which appeared in your illustrious organ on 6 May, did Lord Gnome really intend to welcome Mr Brillo Pad ABROAD?

If so, I concur with his sentiments entirely.

Yours faithfully,
STEVE CURRY,
Richmond, Surrey.

Certifiable

Sir,

For a publication so obsessed with BSkyB, your grasp of facts about it is painfully weak.

There are no "satellite television conglomerates based in Luxembourg". BSkyB is based in the UK, and is regulated by the ITC. Like all UK broadcasters, we do not transmit films refused a cinema or video certificate by the BBFC. All three Child's Play films were duly certified by the BBFC (two of them as 15s) before transmission by Sky.

Perhaps you are simply confused by the fact that the BBFC also used to certificate films directly for Sky — a practice we abandoned last year after transmission judgments made by the BBFC led to criticism by Sky's regulators. We now use the video versions as certificated by the BBFC as templates, and in practice have to edit 10-15 percent of them in order to make them suitable for our transmission slots. No doubt this explains why there are virtually no complaints to Sky, the ITC or the BSC about screen violence on satellite from the 10½ million people who have access to satellite television.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ELSTEIN,
Head of Programming, BSkyB.

Lookalike

Chatto **Nice-but-Dim**

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the remarkable similarity between Daniel Chatto, the dashing fiancé of Lady Sarah Armstrong-Jones, and the enigmatic TV personality Tim Nice-but-Dim? Are they by any chance related? We think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW LAND
and CALUM MURRAY,
Edinburgh.

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGED

IN A NEAT demonstration of how desperate universities must play the numbers game, the deputy dean of Leeds Metropolitan University has ordered 180 staff to enrol as "students" on a computer course.

The former poly wanted to boost its enrolment figures to stop the faculty losing a large chunk of its income from the Higher Education Funding Council. A case of never mind the quality, count the "students".

WATER NEWS

BANKER Eric Wilson, who replaced the outspoken Diana Scott as chair of the water watchdog Ofwat in Yorkshire (*Eyes passim*), is accused of bottling out of his first confrontation.

Ofwat was due to hold its May meeting in Scarborough, but it cancelled at the last meeting because Mr Wilson discovered he had a pressing speaking engagement elsewhere. The decision was entirely unrelated to the fact that Ofwat had got wind of angry residents who were planning to raise a stink about pollution from their local sewage works.

The "open" meeting was then rearranged on more friendly territory — Ofwat's Leeds HQ — for the following week. According to the unimpressed Scalby Mills residents association in Scarborough: "The smell coming out of Eric Wilson's appointment is now only equalled by the stench from Scalby Mills sewage works."

I-SPY

Cookham

Submitted by Sheila Benton. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Potato blight

Sir,

Does your prudish Couch Potato really believe that intervention from backbench MPs and howls of tabloid rage are welcome or appropriate reactions to EUROTRASH*? The programme is everything that it claims to be, it's nothing more than the TV equivalent of your best column: "Funny Old World". If the BBC can waste air-time repeating* HAVE I GOT NEWS FOR YOU *less than 24 hours after the original, surely Channel 4 is entitled to just 30 minutes a week on something as frivolous as* EUROTRASH.

The main trouble with TV is that it is becoming increasingly safe and boring. Has Couch Potato ever sat through HEARTBEAT, PEAK PRACTICE *or the one about the lifeboat? It's all shite. And what about all the snooker and golf and the pulling of* PANORAMA*?*

Sincerely,
J.W. CARR,

Colchester, Essex.

Calling-card

Dear Mr McLie,

I always read your column in PRIVATE EYE *with great pleasure — it's so full of wry and witty observations. I don't know if you are interested in birds as I am, but have you heard one I have lately which sounds a double note — as it were, "Cuckoo... Cuckoo".*

Perhaps you (or one of your readers) might have an idea of what it is called?

Yours sincerely,
EUAN GRAHAM,

Calne, Wilts.

Ad Nauseam

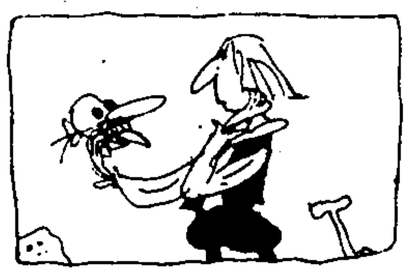
Sir,

Is there a more blatant rip-off than the ad for Wrangler jeans in which three American city types become cowboys and learn how to herd cattle?

The makers of the film City Slickers, in which three city types become cowboys and learn how to herd cattle, must be very saddle sore.

BILLY CRYSTAL,

LA.



LUVVIES

On learning some mildly tragic news he [Hugh Grant] will respond with a face like a funeral and a cry of "That's *too* awful." On hearing some juicy gossip, it will be: "Oh, rivet! rivet!" On his habitual tidiness: "Oh yes, I'm a real clean queen"; on his extended period of accepting parts in dodgy European television movies: "I was troughing at the time. I had *really* troughed"; on his television addiction: "I'm a telly girl. I think we all are, aren't we?"; on being grumpy: "Am I tetchy? I am, aren't I? I'm getting so grumpy. I'm a proper Mr Grump, aren't I?" His favourite new phrase is "shouty crackers"...

Sunday Times Magazine

Submitted by Maxie Szalwinska.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Veteran BBC commentator Murray Walker said it was the blackest day for Grand Prix racing since he had started covering the sport."

BBC Teletext News (after the death of Ayrton Senna)
(Sarah Brown)

"He [Courtney Walsh] ripped the heart out of England, both metaphorically and physically."

COMMENTATOR, BBC
(Vince Bowden)

"Three-nothing Finland. And Russia are lucky to get nothing."

ICE-HOCKEY COMMENTATOR, BBC2
(Sebastien Berger)

"And that was the second movement of Beethoven's 7th Symphony by... er... Beethoven."

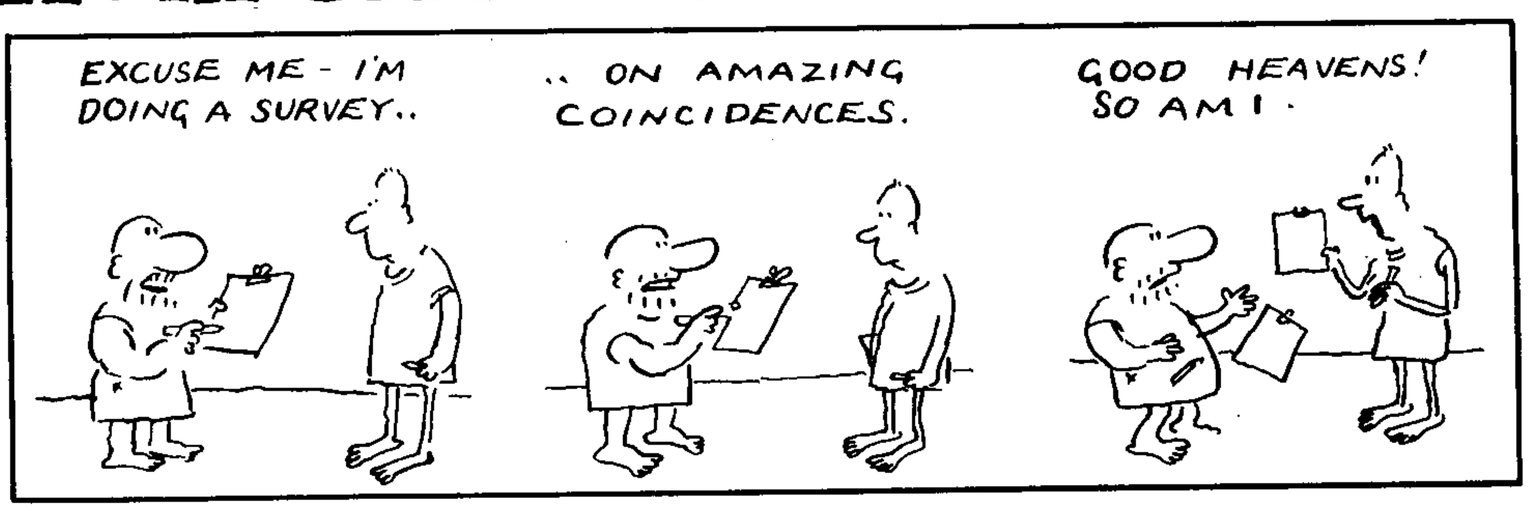
CLASSIC FM
(Lizzie Craig)

"So how does it feel to have your first ever debut Number One?"

DOCTOR FOX, Network Chart Show
(Joe Jones)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from

St Vincent and the Grenadines

from Our Own Correspondent

ST VINCENT and the Grenadines may be one of Her Maj's lesser known dominions, but they are still well known in some circles.

For a start HMS — that's her sister Margaret, not a battleship — haunts our island of Mustique, where a motley collection of layabouts, parasites and drug lords have almost seceded from the rest of the country. Indeed, so unwelcome are our compatriots that the Mustique company ruled that the locals could not be buried in the expensive real estate of their island home but their corpses had to be shipped to the next island of Bequia.

Bequia, incidentally, is the home of our prime minister James Mitchell, who very likely knows where a few bodies are buried — metaphorically, of course. St Vincent is now a flag of convenience — and very convenient traders in some forms of commodities find it, too.

Among the more memorable incidents was the 1992 case of the Lucky Star, which was stopped low in the water with a cargo of $3 billion worth of cannabis — the world record for one shipment. Of course our PM was only concerned with the question of national independence and sovereignty when for nine days he refused the US coast guard permission to board the vessel.

And it was only with the profoundest sense of national interest that he consulted a New York lawyer, whose mysterious client lived in Mustique in a house with the same name as the company that owned the ship, Palmyra, before reluctantly allowing the search. So no one knows yet who actually owns the ship — except that they may not be entirely unconnected to Sicily.

It took some serious searching to find the details of the ship's registration — and a court writ of mandamus on the shipping registry to force it to reveal public information. We then discovered that the St Vincent's shipping registry is a sort of branch office of the main operation — run by Bozo Dabinovic, a Serb who divides his time between Monaco and that well-known sea port of Geneva.

Dabinovic's other interests include a Serbian oil company which has been unkindly associated with sanctions busting. It may pay NATO to check out any tanker with a St Vincent flag passing up the Adriatic, but one would have thought that a St Vincent flag would be something of a liability these days since drug enforcement agencies lick their lips whenever our vessels hove into view.

However, we do not allow incidents like that — or the fact that the US state department describes this as the worst place in the Caribbean for drug deals — to impugn the integrity of our leader. If we did, we'd never get a job in the public service. And unless we want to make beds for fornicating foreigners on Mustique and the other resorts, there is little else to offer.

Still, last September Mitchell excelled himself by passing retrospective legislation to approve his negotiations with a mysterious Italian company to build a marina and dockyard. He had given them 40 acres of government land on a 99-year lease and guaranteed a massive loan to the company in which the unkind suggest he himself has a significant stake.

If the company were to default, every citizen would be liable for the equivalent of a year's income. In return, the government got a minority shareholding — for which it paid by borrowing money from the company!

No wonder people ask if there will be any customs officials at this new yacht harbour, something of a formality in the limpid blue waters of the Grenadines which are known and loved for their coral reefs — and for being the biggest shipment point for nasal medication in the region.

But never mind. Visitors are welcome to come to St Vincent and have a whale of a time — literally. Totally uninfluenced by promises of Japanese yen, we have joined the international whaling control committee — and voted to let our colleagues from Tokyo conduct scientific research into how to turn Moby Dick into sushi and flipper into fillets. The only whale that's safe around here is HRH on Mustique.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "From now on I shall use the launderette," said Guo Donglin, pointing at the two accused, Cheng Chun-Keung and Chung Chouk-kau. "Truly, these scoundrels should be buried to the neck in sand, have honey poured over their heads, and then red ants should be released."

Guo was telling the Hong Kong District Court what had happened when he entered the showroom of the Glorious Electrical Company at 258, Queen's Road West: "I saw a Hitachi washing machine on sale for $1,280 so I paid for it and waited for it to be brought out from the stockroom. After twenty minutes, the manager Chung asked me to follow him to the back of the store, where he told me that I *really* wanted to buy a Chinese Jinling-brand machine for $3,500 instead. When I said I only wanted a Hitachi, his assistant Cheng appeared, took off his shirt to show me his tattoos, and asked : 'Do you dare to give us trouble?'

"Cheng is a big man, and I am frail, but I was not afraid. I called him a monkey and asked for a refund, but Cheng grabbed me around the neck and dislocated my right shoulder, so I bit him on the arm. They both pinned me down on a sofa, then Chung took a pair of pincers and threatened to extract all my teeth if I bit Cheng again. He also said he would send someone to burn down my flat, kill me, rape my neighbours and dance on my grave. 'You are pieces of shit,' he kept shouting at me. 'The only way out is to buy another washing machine.' Then they mentioned they were Triads so, out of fright, I paid another $2,200 and fled.

"They have since delivered the Jinling but I am not a happy man. The rubber round the door leaks and it moves across the floor on Full Spin. Chinese machines are not made very well. I told them. I wanted a Hitachi." *(South China Morning Post, 2/4/94. Spotter — P.J. Morris)*

— ● —

● "These stories fly in the face of common sense," Phra Dharmamatanobhas told a press conference in Bangkok. "How could anyone have sex on the deck of a ferry in Scandinavia in winter? It would be too cold to get an erection."

Phra Dharmamatanobhas was defending a fellow Buddhist monk, Phra Yantra Amaro Bikhu, against accusations of repeatedly breaking his

vow of celibacy: "There has been a misunderstanding. Phra Yantra is innocent. He only lets men near him, and always keeps women at a distance. True, there are pictures of him getting into the back of a van with a woman harpist, but he merely did this to demonstrate advanced Tantric positions to her. Furthermore, the DNA test demanded by the Belgrade woman in the paternity suit was obviously faulty, and the Stavanger ferry incident only took place in the fevered, opium-inspired imagination of a Cambodian nun, Kaewta Mongchinda, who deserves to be punished in the deepest hell.

"But people should understand the temptations we monks must endure in the modern world. As soon as we look heavenwards in prayer, we see advertisements for women's undergarments. Many of us use rotting corpse contemplation to surmount lust, and I agree with the prosecution that the monk who was caught having sex with a corpse during funeral rites did wrong. But do not tar us all with the same brush." *(The Sydney Morning Herald, 5/4/94. Spotter — Charles Stokes)*

— ● —

● *"I have promised to keep his identity confidential," said Jane Setherton, a spokesman for the Marriot Hotel, Bristol, "but I can confirm that he is no longer in our employment.*

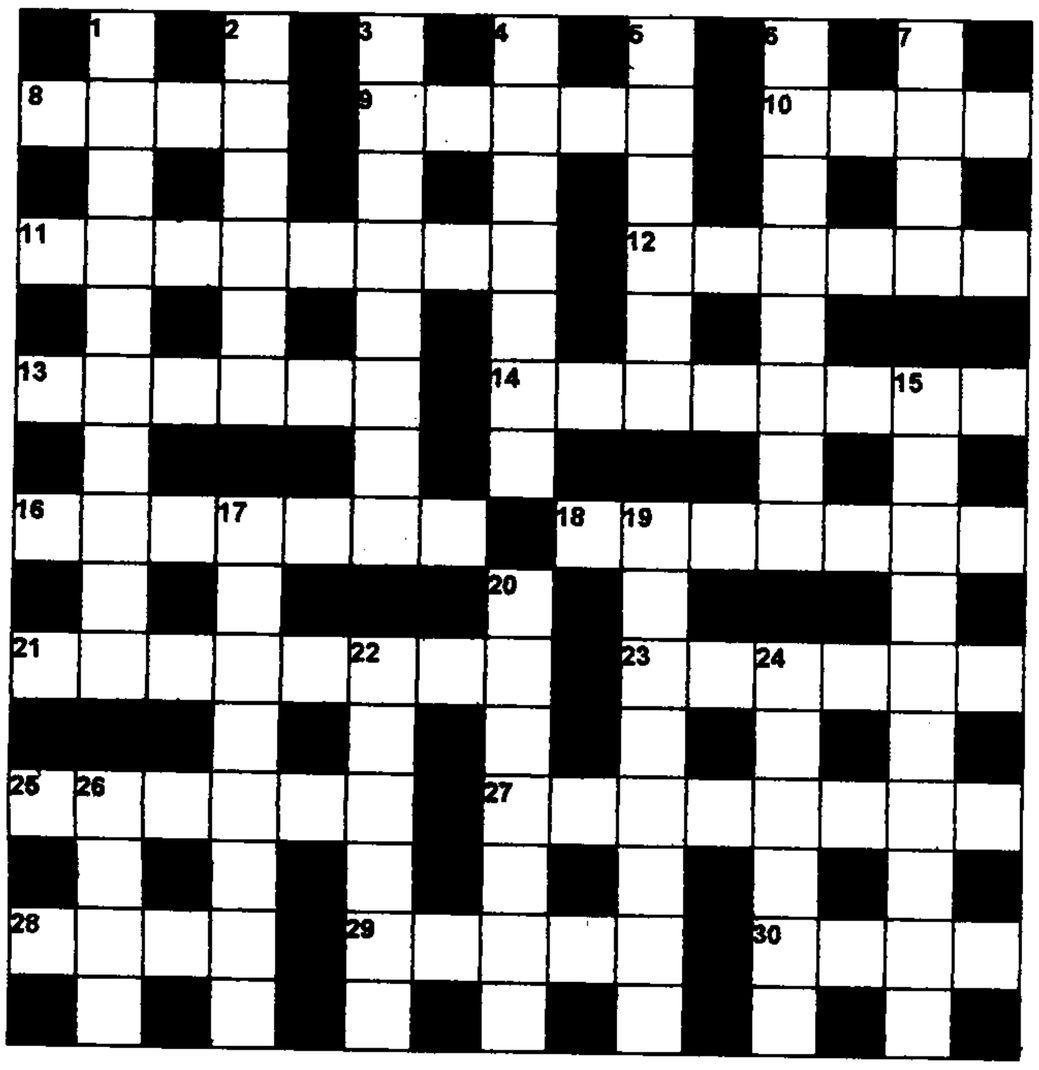
"We asked him to clean one lift, and he spent four days on the job. When I asked him why, he replied: 'Well, there are twelve of them, one on each floor, and sometimes some of them aren't there.' Eventually, we realised that he thought each floor had a different lift, and he'd cleaned the same one twelve times.

"We had to let him go. It seemed best all round. I understand he is now working for Woolworths." (Bristol Evening Post, 18/3/94. Spotter — R. Jones)

Compiled by
Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 2 by Cyclops

1st £100 winner MIKE DREW



ACROSS

8/28 A national symbol, Major? Bollocks! (4,4)
9 (see 21)
10 Source of Swedish models entertained by Mike Atherton (4)
11 Peter, in shady parlance, needs arse — likely not a Tory one these days (4,4)
12 Tell-tale marriage advisors topped by Di! (6)
13 Church of England involved with Mars fiasco — makes you cry (6)
14 Dicky goes down, as Martyn would have us hear (4,4)
16 Hurricane liable to strike referee (7)
18 Serb contribution to cease-fire is miles out (7)
21/9 Press revelations, the *Eye*'s scandalous way (6,2,5)
23 Cowshit slapped on figure of minister (6)
25 (see 7 down)
27 What to expect from government economic policy — repossession! (8)
28 (see 8)
29 Ring to get UN and EC backing — doesn't amount to much, though (5)
30 Brenda turns against ministers briefly (4)

DOWN

1 A good many take on a Roman Catholic shit-stirring supporter like St John Stevas (10)
2 React to organ stimulation (6)
3 Tebbit typically means casually going round screwing (5,3)
4 Used to be label attached to energy employees lost (7)
5 Wire off party oddball (6)
6 (see 7)
7/6/25 Framing specialists possibly will mend Picasso with Ted's involvement (4,8,6)
15 Pointless interviewer getting serious with parliamentary liar (10)
17 Mad urge to mount Dicky and a fighter (8)
19 Not at a loss as to where to stick your balls? (2,6)
20 Insult a fart just starting to present TV show (7)
22 Lip service to digits from one's financial advisor? (3,3)
24 Local VAT fiddle by Brenda (new) (6)
26 Responsibility means bugger all to arse-over-tip rag (4)

£100 prize for first correct solution opened on 25/5/94. Send entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD 1

ACROSS: 7/8 Rotten Boroughs 8 (see 7) 9 Blue 10 BBC 11 Orgasm 12 Backbiter 13 Brent 15 Beckett 17 Kneecap 20 Hallo 22 (see 25) 25 Matrix Churchill 26 ANC 27 Dean 28 Dead heat 29 Eunuch.

DOWN: 1 Coalface 2 Streak 3 Inebriate 4 Brook 5 Bugger me 6 The Sun 8 Backer 14 Unfrocked 16 Kilbride 18 Alliance 19 The Arts 21 Abated 23 Hiding 24 Expel.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Thursday

Today was a not entirely satisfactory day for the Conservative Party. According to the papers we have got the fewest votes in a local election since records began. But I am in no measure dispirited. Oh no. Moreover the results were not my fault. They were entirely the fault of Sir Norma Fowler, who is Chairman of the Party (until my friend Jeffrey is ready to take over). "But you said that you were taking personal charge of the campaign, prime minister," said Sir Norma, when I carpeted him. "So I was," I told him, "but you were in charge of the result." That certainly shut him up, particularly when I told him that he would also be in charge of the result of the Euro-elections.

Saturday

Today is another very historic day, as the Channel Tunnel is now open even though it will remain closed until the autumn. My wife Norman and I were invited to travel on the first historic train. "I am sorry," said the guard, "the first carriage is only for heads of state, like President Mitterrand and Mrs Thatcher. You are with the ex-prime ministers such as Mr Heath and Mr Kinnock." It was a very nice journey, although because it was underground you did not get much of a view out of the window. Fortunately I did not feel at all seasick, although some of the journalists seems to be quite ill in the next carriage. When we arrived in Europe, everyone went off to do some shopping in the local supermarket, which funnily enough is called Sainsbury's, just like in England. On the way back to the train I saw my ex-friend Mr Lamont carrying several plastic bags full of clinking bottles. "Pardon me, boy," he said, "is that the Onanugu choo-choo?" and climbed aboard. He certainly seemed to be in good spirits. When some journalists *asked me* for a quote, I told them: "Today shows that we are now at the heart of Europe for good, unless I decide that we are not at the next election."

Sunday

The Sunday papers are all saying that I should have a referendum on Europe. This is a very silly idea, as I have said on many occasions. Do they not realise that since my triumph at Maastricht all this has been settled once and for all? There will be no referendum, unless I decide otherwise, which I might. That is my position and I shall stand firm on it.

Monday

Talking of Mr Portfolio, which I was not, because he is not in my thoughts, quite frankly, and is no threat to me and never will be, because he has no support among most of the party. That is enough of Mr Portfolio.

Tuesday

Today I won a great victory over Mr Portfolio, who has so little support, when I made him publicly apologise for disagreeing with me over the single European currency. He said he was very sorry indeed, and sat there with his fingers crossed and a smile on his face, laughing repentantly. I will not have to mention him again!

Wednesday

Mr Portfolio has very silly hair, and his name is very silly too. That is why I never think about him. But while I am on the subject of Mr Portfolio, which I wasn't, the newspapers even said that Prince Charles's "back to basics" speech was copied from Mr Portfolio's. This is utter nonsense. His Royal Highness's speech was clearly based on my own — ie back to basics, proper spelling, more Shakespeare etc. Perhaps I should not be the one to say it, but Prince Charles has obviously discovered that the key to popularity is to imitate me!

Thursday

Mr Smith has died. It is a very sad day indeed. Everyone is most upset, and at our emergency cabinet meeting everyone was in tears.

"How tragic that it should have happened now," said Sir Norma Fowler, "just when it looked like Labour might win. How terrible that we've been saved by this appalling stroke of good luck."

"Yes," agreed Mr Clarke, "and it does go to show that you can't rely on anyone with a heart problem." He then gave Mr Heseltine a big smile and a friendly thump on the back.

I then called for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to Mr Smith, and once again Mr Waldegrave spoilt it by bringing in the tea with a big chocolate gateau for Mr Heseltine, which was a present from Mr Portfolio.

"It's not my birthday," said Mr Heseltine, but everyone thought it was a nice gesture all the same.

After the minute's silence which we didn't have, I told the Cabinet that Mr Smith had been a very good friend of mine. "Mr Smith and I", I told them in my special solemn-but-lighthearted voice, "often had a drink together. Sometimes it was tea. And sometimes it was *not* tea. Oh no! It was coffee." They all laughed.

Friday

I am in no small measure amazed at the way everyone is going on about Mr Smith. The newspapers are treating him as though he was the Prime Minister. Which he was not. Nor was he going to be. He was a very nice man, but it must be said that he was a bit dull and obviously could never have taken my job.

To show how true this is, I made a very important and interesting speech today in Scotland, where Mr Smith came from, and as a mark of respect to him the audience observed a ten-minute silence as soon as I had finished.

The best bit of my speech, which was written by me, was Mrs Hogg's idea about my beliefs.

"I believe passionately in what I believe," I told the crowd. "I do not believe passionately in what I do not believe. Judge me by what I am. Not what I am not."

At this point, instead of clapping, the audience all sat on their hands, which is obviously a custom in Scotland to show respect to the departed. "He's died!" said one Scotsman. "On his arse!" shouted another for reasons I did not understand.

Anyway, I ended my speech by calling for an end to personal attacks in politics which lower the whole tone of public life.

Saturday

Sir Norma came to see me this morning, having heard my speech. "You're a bloody fool, Prime Minister," he said. "Without any personal attacks we haven't got anything to put in our manifesto."

He then showed me a booklet with everything crossed out. Only one passage remained. It said: "This man is unfit to hold office. He is weak, ineffectual and has no vision."

"We can't say that," I said. "Yes, we can," Sir Norma replied, giving me a funny look. "But *not* about Mr Smith."

BECKETT CALLS FOR 'AUTOMATIC ELECTION' AS TRIBUTE TO SMITH

by Our Political Staff **Lunchtime O'Nion**

MRS Margaret Beckett today received widespread support for her suggestion that, as a tribute to the late John Smith, the Euro Election should be awarded without contest to the Labour Party.

"It would be inappropriate", she said, "to have party political bickering going on when people are still coming to terms with the loss of the greatest political figure of the twentieth century.

"It would surely be a great deal better, as a mark of respect, for the Conservatives to concede all the seats to us at once."

The Trade Onion Movement

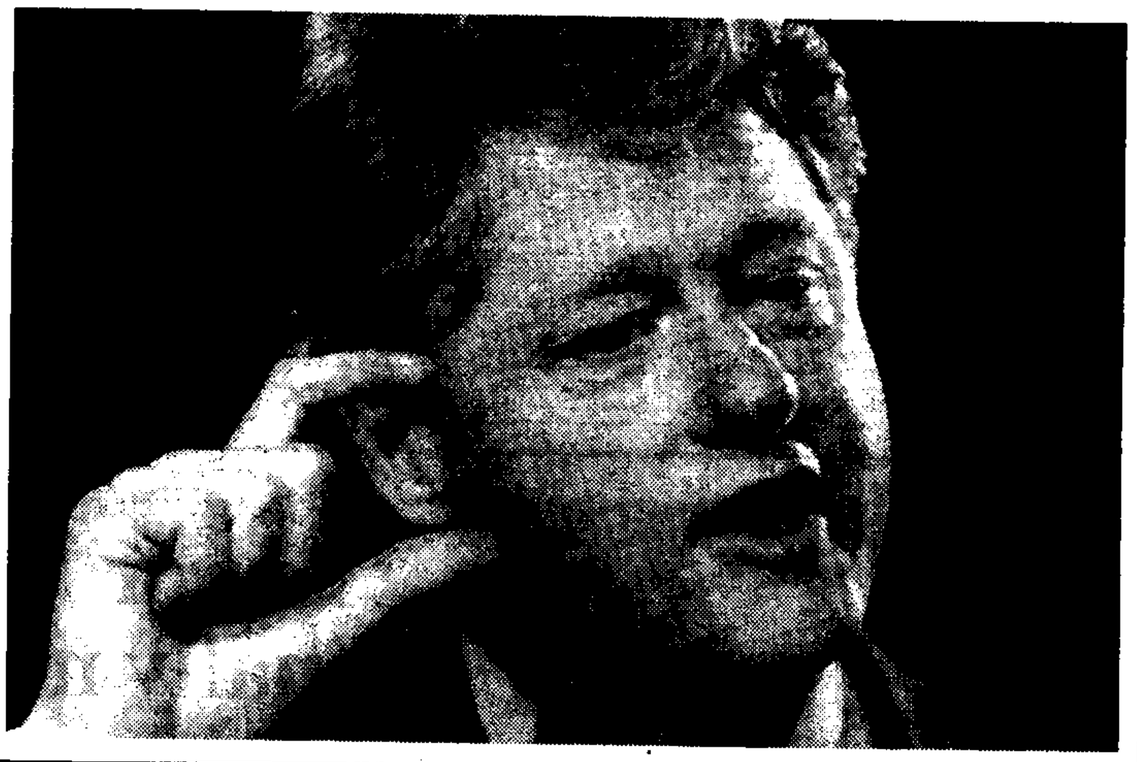
She was however attacked by many of her colleagues in the Labour Party, who accused her of "a lack of respect for the late John Smith".

Said David Blunkett: "Margaret has misread the strength of feeling in the country at the moment. Nothing short of the resignation of the entire Tory government and the immediate formation of a new Labour administration will do as a fitting memorial to the greatest man who has ever lived."

ON OTHER PAGES

Huge run on onions in Westminster 9
Onion shares soar 10
Not even an attempt to be funny by cartoonists 12, 13, 14

HARASSMENT CASE CLINTON GIVES EVIDENCE



THOSE VOLUNTARY TOBACCO RESTRICTIONS IN FULL

We the tobacco companies do solemnly agree to abide by the following far-reaching and binding Government guidelines, as agreed by the Department of Health and ourselves.

☐ **We will only encourage people to smoke more cigarettes.**

☐ **Young people will not be targeted, except for the purposes of increased consumption of cigarettes.**

☐ **Humour will be dropped from all cigarette advertising campaigns. In future, people will be urged to smoke seriously.**

☐ **Sex will only be used after the 9 o'clock watershed (9 a.m.) and then only in every advertisement.**

☐ **Adverts involving naked women smoking in showers will only be used whenever possible.** *(That's enough guidelines. Ed.)*

IN NEXT WEEK'S *OBSCENER*

A new supplement — The Censored Section

DEBATE in more and more areas of public life is being stifled by the Big Brother attitude of Downing Street, Whitehall, and the multinational conglomerates who finance them.

Now the *Obscener* lifts the lid on The Secret State. In issue one:

- **The Truth About Haddock.** How a Grampian documentary was never made after legal threats.
- **Why your driving licence is being used by MI6.**
- **Ken Loach** talks frankly about the Northern Ireland no one mentions.
- **Hundreds of pictures** of naked Swedish birds from porn videos that got banned. Cor!! Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! They're hot! They're sexy! They're in the *OBSERVER*!

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber

HELLO, DON'T I KNOW YOU?
YOU SHOULD DO. I'M ELLE "THE BODY" McPHERSON!
WHY ARE YOU CALLED THAT?
ELLE WAS MY GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S NAME!
Kerber

ON OTHER PAGES

SOUTH AFRICA'S DAY OF SHAME

Why oh why weren't there any bloody massacres during the election like we said there were going to be?

ask **Sir Perishing Worthless, Sir Laurens van der Kaffirbasher, Chief Christopher Bookerleizi, and all the other disappointed right-wing hacks.**

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam Lady Wemyss and Mr George Peppard, Star of The A-Team.

So.
Farewell then
Lady Wemyss,
104.

You were the last
Surviving godchild
Of Queen
Victoria.

And farewell also
George Peppard
Of TV's
A-Team.

You had nothing
Much
In common.
But death
Has now united you.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

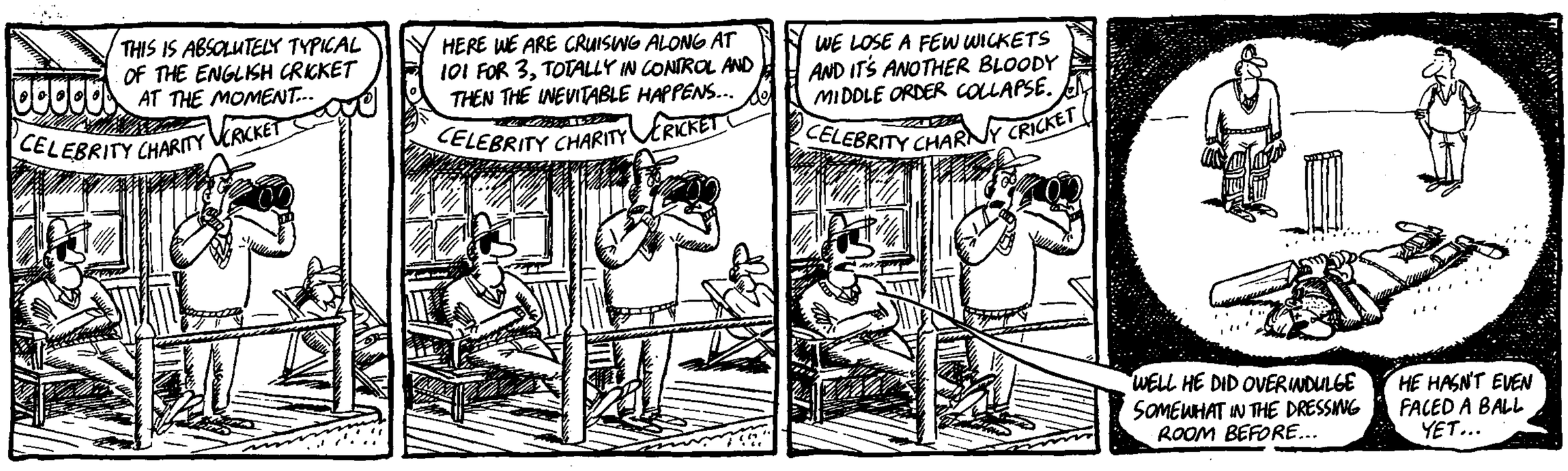
E.J. Thribb was recently runner-up in the election of the new Oxford Professor of Poetry. He polled 0 votes.

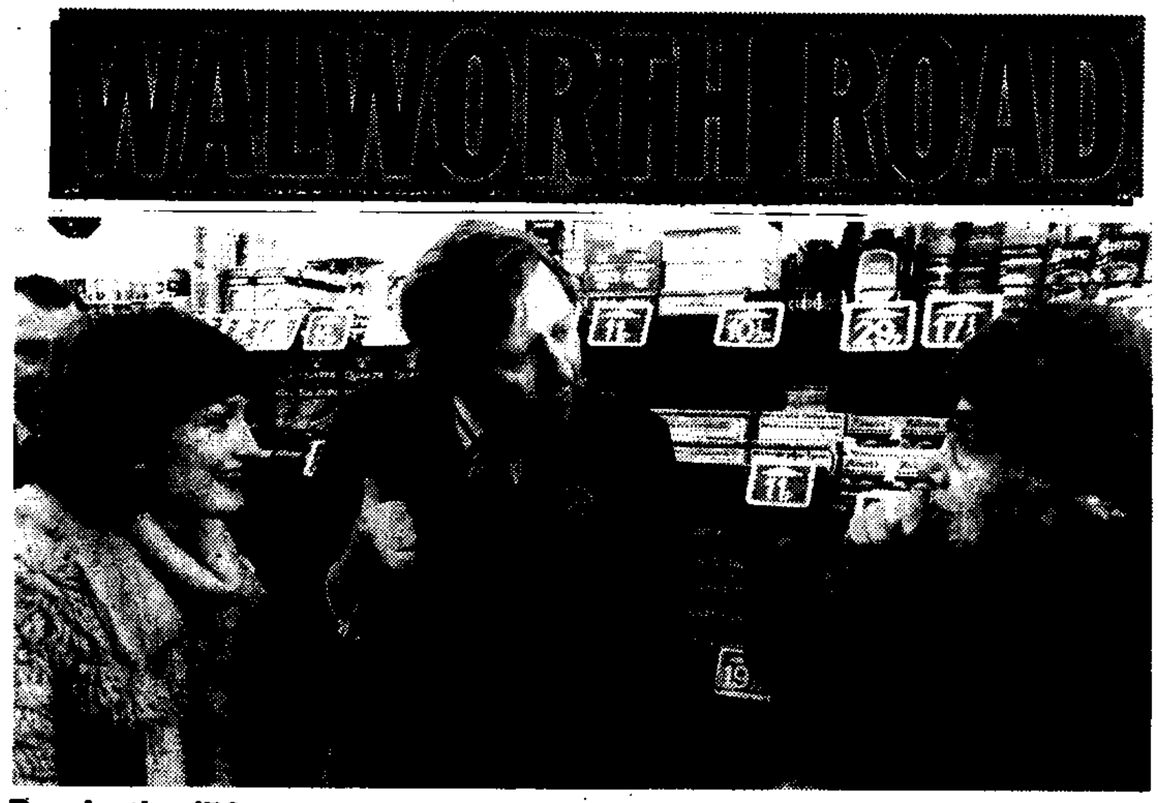
Great Bores Of Today.

"... I think he's gorgeous so English and so charming and yet so self-deprecating which is so sexy you can see why the Americans love him he's the new Cary Grant or David Niven you know the suave witty debonair leading man as opposed to the sort of beefcake Terminator types did you see that dress his girlfriend wore to the opening? amazing mind you he's prettier than she is and in the film he's really shy which I reckon is what he must be like in real life everyone says he's a really good bloke and fame hasn't gone to his head did you see him in *Maurice*? me neither but apparently he was really good in that even though he was gay but you can tell he isn't I mean he can't be anyway in this film he keeps going to weddings and he's always the groom never the bride and it's incredibly funny and well-observed and true to life there's something about we English that no one else can ever imitate look I say everyone's getting cold can we get on with these stupid photos please..."

The
PETER McLIE
Column

IT LOOKS more and more likely that John Smith will be the next Prime Minister. And why not? He is a fellow Scot and a fine and dandy one to boot. *(You're fired. New Ed.)*


THIS IS ABSOLUTELY TYPICAL OF THE ENGLISH CRICKET AT THE MOMENT...
CELEBRITY CHARITY CRICKET
HERE WE ARE CRUISING ALONG AT 101 FOR 3, TOTALLY IN CONTROL AND THEN THE INEVITABLE HAPPENS...
CELEBRITY CHARITY CRICKET
WE LOSE A FEW WICKETS AND IT'S ANOTHER BLOODY MIDDLE ORDER COLLAPSE.
CELEBRITY CHARITY CRICKET
WELL HE DID OVERINDULGE SOMEWHAT IN THE DRESSING ROOM BEFORE...
HE HASN'T EVEN FACED A BALL YET...



Roy in the '70s

Why Roy had to go

by Reg Holdsworth

THE LABOUR Party is more than just a soap opera. It used to be a great national institution. Millions of people used to vote for it.

Its stars were household names — Clement Attlee, Harold Wilson, Barbara Castle, James Chuter-Ede.

Set largely in the North of England, it appealed to people all over the country. For many, its dramas, its internal feuds and squabbles, its larger than life characters, were more interesting than their own lives.

Who can ever forget the thrilling episode in 1967 when cheeky Harold Wilson tried to pretend that he wasn't devaluing the pound?

Or indeed Harold's long-running romance with the blonde bombshell from next door, Lady Falkender?

Very old viewers can even remember the night Hughie Dalton, the old smoothie from Eton, leaked the Budget secrets.

SO, IS it really such a problem that just one of the less memorable minor characters, Roy Hattersley, has now been written out of the script?

In recent episodes we have seen Roy disappear, with the improbable story line that he has gone off to be a journalist and write drivelling pieces about Coronation Street for the Daily Mail.

As a nation, do we really care? The answer is very clear. No, of course not.

© Reg Holdsworth, Granada TV

NEW SUNDAY SHOCK

By Our Religious Staff
Seventh Day-Lewis

THE GOVERNMENT has been heavily criticised today by consumer groups after giving a cautious welcome to plans to hold church services on Sundays.

Said a spokesman for the pressure group Keep Sunday Profitable: "Sunday should be a special day, a day when families can shop together at Sainsbury's and walk round garden centres undisturbed."

He continued: "It's a day for popping into Ladbrokes and putting a few quid on Saucy Ned in the 3.30 at Chepstow.

"The idea of going to church is an unwelcome distraction that will discourage people from spending a traditional Sunday buying shelving units, bickering with the children over sweets at the checkout counter, and watching the racing on the telly in the pub."

The Government however defended itself saying that although it respected people's profound belief in commerce, it could not stand in the way of what it considered "a harmless leisure pursuit such as churchgoing".

YOUR HYMNS ON SUNDAY

- *Onward Desert Orchid*
- *O Little Town of Newmarket (seasonal)*
- *The Day Thou Gavest Lord (Is Now Spent In Texas Homecare)*

WORLD OF ART

'SCREAM' FOUND

by Our Scream Staff
Thelonious Munch

THE most heartrending picture ever painted was found today in a house in central London.

Following a tip-off, police went to a small cul-de-sac off Whitehall where, behind the door of No. 10, they found a hunched figure, his head in his hands, reading the local election results in the Daily Telegraph.

Said the policeman: "It was pathetic. All you could hear was this unending scream. It was something like 'Tunbridge Wells, Basildon, Eastleigh, oh no... oo... o... o... o... oh.'"

The "Screaming Man" has been taken to the cleaners, but experts say he is unlikely ever to be seen in public again.

ON OTHER PAGES

"Screamer" found in House of Commons 9
Badly drawn cartoon by Edward Munch 10

To The Editor of the Daily Telegraph

Eclipse of the Sun

From Sir Herbert Gussett

Sir—With respect to the recent extremely dangerous eclipse of the sun which placed everyone in these islands in the gravest peril, your readers may — if they still have eyes to read — like to know how one group of responsibly-minded citizens responded to the crisis.

Here is a diary of "E-Day" as it unfolded in this corner of the West Country:

5am Still fast asleep.

7am Woke up to hear Miss Sue McGregor warning us of the catastrophe that was about to befall us all. She stated that in no circumstances should anyone view the sun with the naked eye during the period of that evening's eclipse, or they would certainly be blinded for life.

8.55 Mr Michael Fish in his invaluable weather forecast repeats the warning that anyone wishing to witness the fatal eclipse should follow the government guidelines as set out by Mr Gummer in his Code of Practice For Solar Observation During An Eclipse Situation (HMSO £39).

1pm On the One O'Clock News Mr John Tusa and Mr Patrick Moore, the eminent astrologer, both echo Government health warnings several times throughout the bulletin, as other consultants and experts continued to do for the next few hours.

5.30pm Taking due heed of the approaching end of the world, as it seemed to us, a group of dedicated and fearless eclipsologists, led by myself and Lt Col "Buffy" Frobisher, proceeded to our chosen observation point, namely the Back Room of the Lamb & Flag, where Mr Balon kindly provided us with the equipment we required for "safe" viewing of the impending eclipse, viz 4 thick heavy duty tumblers, designed to be held close to the face, filled with high-density amber-coloured fluid, eg Auld Fairbairn's 100° Triple Malt ("a wee dram afore ye resign").

6.15pm Countdown begins. First we draw all the curtains, as advised by Mr Fish and others, thus blocking out the sun completely.

6.30 Practice run of eclipse procedure.

6.35 Ditto. All systems functioning properly.

6.45 Master Sidney Balon, son of our host, comes in to inform us that the long-awaited eclipse had taken place behind total cloud cover, and was now over. This news was greeted with loud applause, and Lt Col Frobisher went outside to sound the "All Clear" from the village air raid siren.

We then proceeded to celebrate our safe deliverance for several hours, including many toasts to Mr Fish, Mr Moore and all those experts who had helped to save Planet Earth from its threatened day of disaster.

SIR H. GUSSETT,
Dunviewin,
Nelson St Mandela,
Somerset.

New University Challenge What viewers will see

(Silly music. Two teams sit either side of J. Paxman. One is captioned UNIVERSITY OF NEASDEN, FORMERLY THE NORTH CIRCULAR POLYTECHNIC, the other BROWNOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD)

Paxman *(for it is he)*: Good evening. Here is your starter for ten. Who is the central character in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*?

(Buzzer sounds)

Voice Over: Wibble, Neasden, reading Media Studies and Counselling...

Wibble: Richard the Third?

Paxman: Oh really! Are you seriously suggesting that Richard the Third is the answer to the question? You are pathetic...

Wibble: Er... Sorry, sir.

Paxman: I'm going to offer it to Brownose.

(Buzzer sounds)

Voice Over: Chenevix-Twit, Brownose, reading English Literature...

Chenevix-Twit: Is it Oliver Twist?

Paxman: Come off it! Call yourself a student? There are people watching this programme to whom you *owe* a correct answer. Now come on!

Chenevix-Twit: Er... was it Middlemarch?

Paxman: I ask the questions here. Right, no marks for anyone. Back to Peter in the sandpit...

© Granada

MAGIC LIE

The craze that's sweeping the House of Commons

Just look closely at this picture of Nicholas Scott, the Disability Minister, for a few seconds and you won't believe your eyes! It's like magic! What was a two-dimensional MP distorts completely into a liar! Huge whoppers suddenly appear from his mouth! Porky-pies materialise as if from nowhere! Blatant untruths jump out at you!

It's incredible! Like him!
So buy Magic Lie! The Prime Minister did!

© N.E. ThingwilldototelltheHouseofCommons

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR

A POOPA-SCOOPA

Labour Leadership – now the race is on!

WHO will inherit the mantle of leader of Britain's top Labour Party? For the man or woman they choose will probably be the next incumbent of Britain's leading No. 10 Downing Street.

Gordon Blair, 48. Tough, charming, articulate, intensely dull *(surely 'able'? Ed)*. Came to prominence as Shadow Environment spokesman during the long-running debate over the Sewage and Drainage Privatisation Bill in 1989-90. He says: "It is much too soon for me to consider myself as party leader, but vote for me all the same."

Tony Brown, 48. Tough, charming, intensely articulate, supremely boring *(surely 'talented'? Ed)*. Came to prominence during Question Time debate on whether eating spam fritters was an appropriate way to celebrate D-Day. He says: "It is much too soon to throw my hat in the ring, but I think I am the man for the job."

Mrs Margaret Thatcher *(surely 'Beckett'? Ed)*, 54. Longtime critic of John Major, may well see leading the Labour Party as her best chance for revenge.

Bernie Grant, 54. Although an outsider, he could benefit from the strong feeling that it is time the party had a black leader.

Stephen Fry, 26. Shy, outspoken, intensely wealthy novelist, he could benefit from the desire to have a leader who is a celibate homosexual and good in TV commercials.

Glenda Kinnock, 49. Controversial, outspoken woman politician, former wife of Nelson Mandela. Came to prominence during famous "Seagull" TV commercial of 1987.

John Major, 51. Petulant, arrogant, intensely untalented, the prime minister could easily win the next election for the Labour Party.

JOHN MAJOR

1943-1994

The greatest Prime Minister who never was

A nation today was stunned at the loss of John Major after a massive defeat in the Euro-Elections. He had already suffered a similar defeat on a previous occasion only a month ago and the second one proved fatal. Despite advice to give up, John Major refused to make any concessions to anyone. "I will fight on," he says. We will never see his like again. Thank goodness.

THOSE TRIBUTES IN FULL

Margaret Thatcher: *"No comment."*

President Mitterrand: *"Qui?"*

Bill Clinton: *"I'm sorry, there is no one to take your call at the Oval Office. The President is in bed with a young lady. Please leave your name and number and he will get back to you."*

A Doctor writes **Heart Disease**

As a doctor, I am sometimes rung up in the middle of the night by an anxious editor suffering from Chronic Word Shortage, or *Paginus vacuus tofillus* to give it the full medical name.

What happens is that John Smith dies and newspapers devote hundreds of pages to the problems of heart disease.

In these circumstances, a doctor will calculate the number of words required before deciding how much money should be administered to himself.

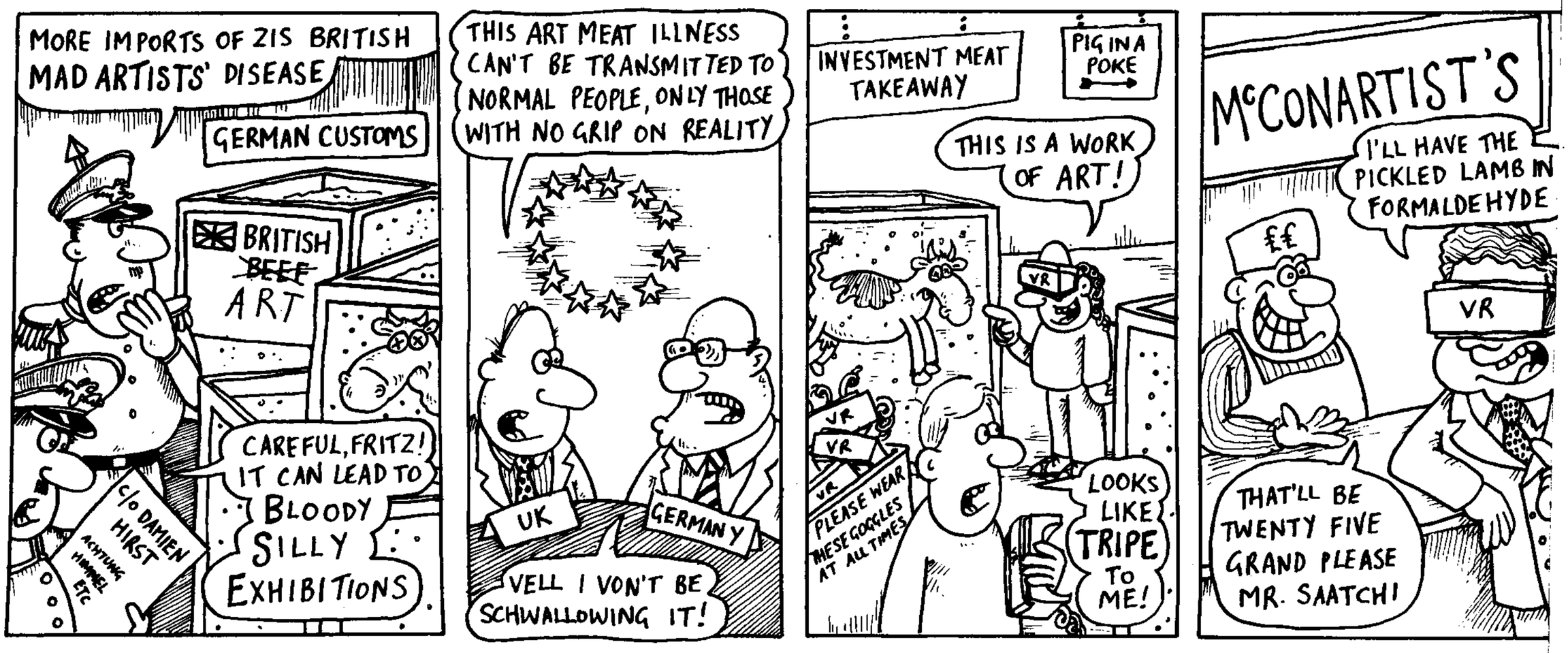
Normally the rate would be two pounds per word or thereabouts, but this may vary depending on the nature of the newspaper involved and the volume of other pieces the doctor has to churn out.

If you are a newspaper editor and you require an emergency filler, my mobil number is 0898 736424.

© *A. Doctor*

VIRTUAL REALITY

BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ


MORE IMPORTS OF ZIS BRITISH MAD ARTISTS' DISEASE
GERMAN CUSTOMS
BRITISH BEEF ART
C/o DAMIEN HIRST ACHTUNG MINNEL ETC
CAREFUL, FRITZ! IT CAN LEAD TO BLOODY SILLY EXHIBITIONS
THIS ART MEAT ILLNESS CAN'T BE TRANSMITTED TO NORMAL PEOPLE, ONLY THOSE WITH NO GRIP ON REALITY
UK
GERMANY
VELL I VON'T BE SCHWALLOWING IT!
INVESTMENT MEAT TAKEAWAY
PIG IN A POKE
THIS IS A WORK OF ART!
VR
PLEASE WEAR THESE GOGGLES AT ALL TIMES
LOOKS LIKE TRIPE TO ME!
McCONARTIST'S
I'LL HAVE THE PICKLED LAMB IN FORMALDEHYDE
£€
THAT'LL BE TWENTY FIVE GRAND PLEASE MR. SAATCH!

The ST PETERSBURG GAZETTE

incorporating NevSky News

May 18 1792 — Price 2 roubles

WOMAN BOSS TO BE SUED

'We were sexually harassed' claim employees

by Our Moscow Staff SERGE TROUSERSOV

Millions of guardsmen are to sue the Empress Catherine the Great, over allegations that she had sexually harassed them over a period of 30 years.

They claim the CSArina "abused her position" as their employer and commander-in-chief, by ordering them to share her bed and to perform "lewd acts for her enjoyment".

A statement signed by the entire Preobrazhensky Guards Regiment states that the Imperial Ruler Of All The Russias used "improper pressure" to compel the soldiers to engage in intercourse with her, such as threatening to execute them immediately if they didn't get on with it.

Pre-Reds In The Bed

The men were all agreed that working for Catherine had been "an absolute nightmare — a living hell".

"All we wanted to do," said one Cossack officer, Count Nikersov Tolstoy, "was to get on with our job of persecuting innocent serfs and demanding money from them. But this woman kept on pestering us and demanding sex."

The court was shown several billion pairs of sexy fur underpants which the officers claim had been given to them all by the crazed Empress C., in her insatiable desire to get them all into bed.

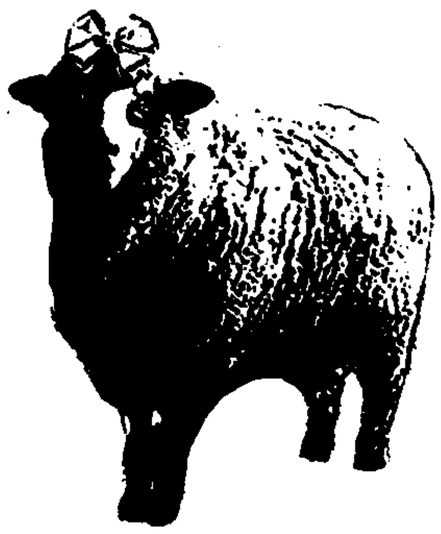
The CSA is one year old.

The victims of Empress C.

The Romantic Comedy That Everyone's Talking About

no Wedding and a few Divorces[15]

starring EDDIE WINDSOR as the lovable, hopeless, upper class twit who won't commit himself to marriage. Long after the rest of his set get hitched.



The screwball fun begins when Eddie watches Charles pair off with Di and then Andy seals the knot with Fergie! With disastrously comic results. Why won't Eddie take the plunge with Sophie? Why do you think? It's the sexy, funny, warm, touching classic British comedy that you thought they didn't make any more.

Now all over the papers! Co-starring SOPHIE RHYS JONES as... the blonde who looks a bit like Di.

DIARY

If you'll just let me finish... it's always a tremendous morale-booster to be at the launch of a major new Health Service promotion, setting out in the clearest possible terms the achievements and progress springing from the bold new initiatives being undertaken by our Department.

Last week saw the launch of our 'Get Up and Go' video package for the terminally ill, which showed that, under our important new 'ADIOS' scheme, up to 48% of all first-time mortalities are now being allowed to pass away peacefully in the comfort of their own homes, and a further 86% are being treated by a skilled operative — in the vast majority of cases a trained funeral director — within just 48 hours of their permanent cessation. Figures also show that 93% of our patients are beginning to enjoy death much more, with up to 47% at any one time maintaining that they have either quite enjoyed or very much enjoyed their last few minutes, and a further 82% saying that, given the choice, they were glad to have breathed their last in the warmth and comfort of a hospital corridor rather than under the sometimes traumatic conditions of the operating theatre. This must be good news for us all, and recent surveys undertaken by our Department suggest that up to 42% of hospital corridors at any one time offer warm, caring environments to at least eight corpses, and that a further 93% of these corpses look either "quite cheerful" or "very cheerful indeed". This all rather makes me think that a jolly good pat on the department back from some elements in the media may be long overdue!

Virginia Says: Devolving responsibility to the consumer constitutes a major initiative. Do please save time and trouble by performing minor hip replacement surgery in the comfort of your own home. A sharp knife, a couple of safety pins and a clean set of garden tools should do the trick saving our Health Service the countless millions we desperately need to spend on costly cutbacks and bold money-saving initiatives.

Not long now until our celebrated annual Bottomley clan holiday get-together on the Isle of Wight, with all the organisation and reorganisation involved. It's always a simple, family affair, but as I say on my seaside postcards, a decent holiday is all about having the courage to devolve responsibility whilst keeping a tight trip on overall budgetary requirements.

The statistics of the Bottomley family seaside initiative are really quite staggering: four

THE RT HON VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY MP

great uncles (including the celebrated Cambridge croupier Benjamin Bottomley), three great aunts (among them the distinguished Conservative thinker Lavinia Lobottomey), twelve nephews and nieces (including a regional Pickastix champion and two Blue Peter badge holders), eight cousins (among them a senior newscaster and prime-site dental hygienist), three Jays, five Crows and eight Wrens, ten television camera crews, fifteen still photographers, twenty print journalists, a senior branch manager from good old Marks and Spencer plus accompanying fitters, two press officers from the Department of Health, a variety of catering vans for the media and, of course, my own immediate family, in statistical accordance with department projections, comprising one son, two daughters and my devoted husband Peter the backbencher, he's sweet.

And all for an ice-lolly in a straw hat on the beach at 1100 hours before an immediate return to the Department by noon for seasons reduction of organisational overload! Sometimes I think it's hardly worth it — but then I consider the very real pleasure those beaming photos of generations of Bottomleys give to so many millions of Britons, and — call me a big softie — I simply cannot say "no"! Tremendous fun!

Virginia Says: Never forget your photographer when visiting a hospital — there may always be a patient who can manage a smile.

Despite what the media would like to have us think, I find that ordinary Britons up and down the country continue to have great faith in our Health Service. Let me give you an example, if you'll let me finish.

Last week, as I was opening a new bulldozer, an old woman came up to me. "Mrs Bottomley," she said, tears in her eyes," I'd like to thank you for all you've done for our local hospital. It was the most terrible eyesore blocking out our lovely view and luckily I'm on BUPA."

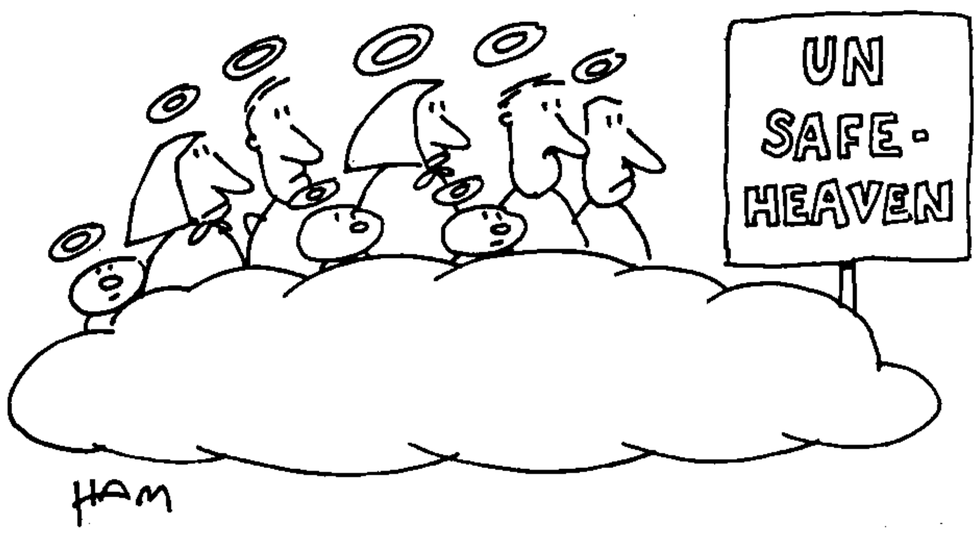
These and many millions of other heart-warming tales concerning the success of the Government's Health Initiatives are told to me regularly by ordinary, decent Britons. So why, may I ask, are they never reported in the media?

Virginia Says: Tests show that excessive use of alcohol and tobacco is no longer a problem among the deeply infirm and recently deceased. I think the rest of us could jolly well learn something from their example, don't you?

Many years ago, I joined the Conservative Party and if you'll let me finish I'll tell you why. I joined the Conservative Party because I *cared*. I *cared* about the massive amounts of ordinary taxpayers' money being thrown at other people's problems, I *cared* about reducing overheads in our Health Service, I *cared* that our doctors and nurses were getting a raw deal and I *knew* that only through cutting their workload by reducing the numbers of patients would we find ourselves in a position to lay them off in any great numbers.

Sometimes I look at myself in the mirror and I hear people say to me, "Virginia, your trouble is that you *care* too much — you really should be more ambitious". But frankly I'm not the ambitious type — after all, if I were *really* ambitious, I'd be prime minister by now, and not just in seven to eight years time.

Virginia Says: I visited a lovely, lovely old gentleman in hospital the other day, a really thoroughly smashing old boy. "Give us a glass of water, Virginia, love — I'm dying," he joked, a twinkle in his eye, while the photographer was reloading his camera. "Why not get in touch with your local water company?" I explained, caringly. He'd obviously never heard about our super new emphasis on the devolution of responsibility to the consumer, so I pressed our new "Away with You" Health Service pamphlet into his hand. He died later that night, and, do you know, he had read it all the way through! Just one of the many lovely caring success stories from today's revitalised Department of Health, working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, just to make my world a better place.



Kwame Agyeman (right) aged 29. Although new to the carpet trade has a passionate belief that CCS Eurotuft and the ranges they offer will have a massive impact in his native homeland.

Movie director Michael Winner and dress designer Caroline Charles will also hang with Mr Major as Ann's contribution to the London exhibition.

Sunday Post

The Stocklists

Literary Review

Let's cop a Freel...

Under the Vulcania
Maureen Freely
(Bloomsbury, £4.99)

FEMALE erotica, in case you didn't know, is being widely advertised as the next big thing.

The *Black Lace* paperbacks, full of wide-eyed babes being pleasured senseless by their husky seducers, sell by the truckload. The women's magazines, bulked out with lip-smacking "confessions of a one-night stand", grow ever smuttier; and the whole phenomenon gives any number of serious lady journalists the excuse to pen knowing articles on the hoary subject of "What do women want?"

Or even write the stuff themselves. If Maureen Freely has any reputation these days, it is as one of the daffier breed of *Guardian* women: the kind who regard the moral pronouncements from the likes of John Patten and Peter Lilley as a sort of personal insult. There are numbers of them about; but Ms Freely pitches the line louder and more kookily than most. All this is a pity as she used to be a serious novelist — *The Life of The Party*, about an American ex-pat community, was particularly good — before turning her hand to the vexed question of female destiny.

The "Vulcania" of this tiny fable — no more than a short story bulked out to something approaching standard length by extremely wide margins — turns out to be a type of hilltop sex palace where wealthy and unsatisfied women head in search of diversion. Here they can take advantage of a range of enviable facilities: lingering in the Palace of Foreplay, refreshing themselves at the Hard-On Café, or simply allowing themselves to be pleasured senseless by relays of nervous and deferential "beaux", mostly hard-up college students.

Excuse me a moment while I loosen my tie, but you get the idea? This is the old girls-on-top idea gone hardcore, the sort of thing that might make a 15-page short story in the hands of someone like Martin Amis, but just dies at novella length, crushed by the weight of dutifully recited detail and, of course, some very coy and laboured smut.

Much of *Under The Vulcania* concerns a woman named Fiona who, stifled by her amiable and caring husband, checks in for a little fantasy fulfilment. The result, every 10 pages or so, is a passage like the following: "You like this, don't you?" he was saying as his pumping grew more rapid. "You could do this all day, couldn't you? You've missed your vocation. You could have been an A-one slut. I'm telling you, lady, whoever you are, you make me feel like I'm the one who's paying."

Oh deary me. Is this supposed to be a joke? On balance, possibly yes, and no doubt there is an immensely serious and complicated subtext here about female fantasies. It goes something like this: clever women humiliate stupid men by making them parrot ridiculous sex-chat, while still somehow being excited by them, er (it gets a bit confusing here) either because they enjoy humiliating them, or, er, because they enjoy being humiliated themselves (but it's all right because they're *paying* for it).

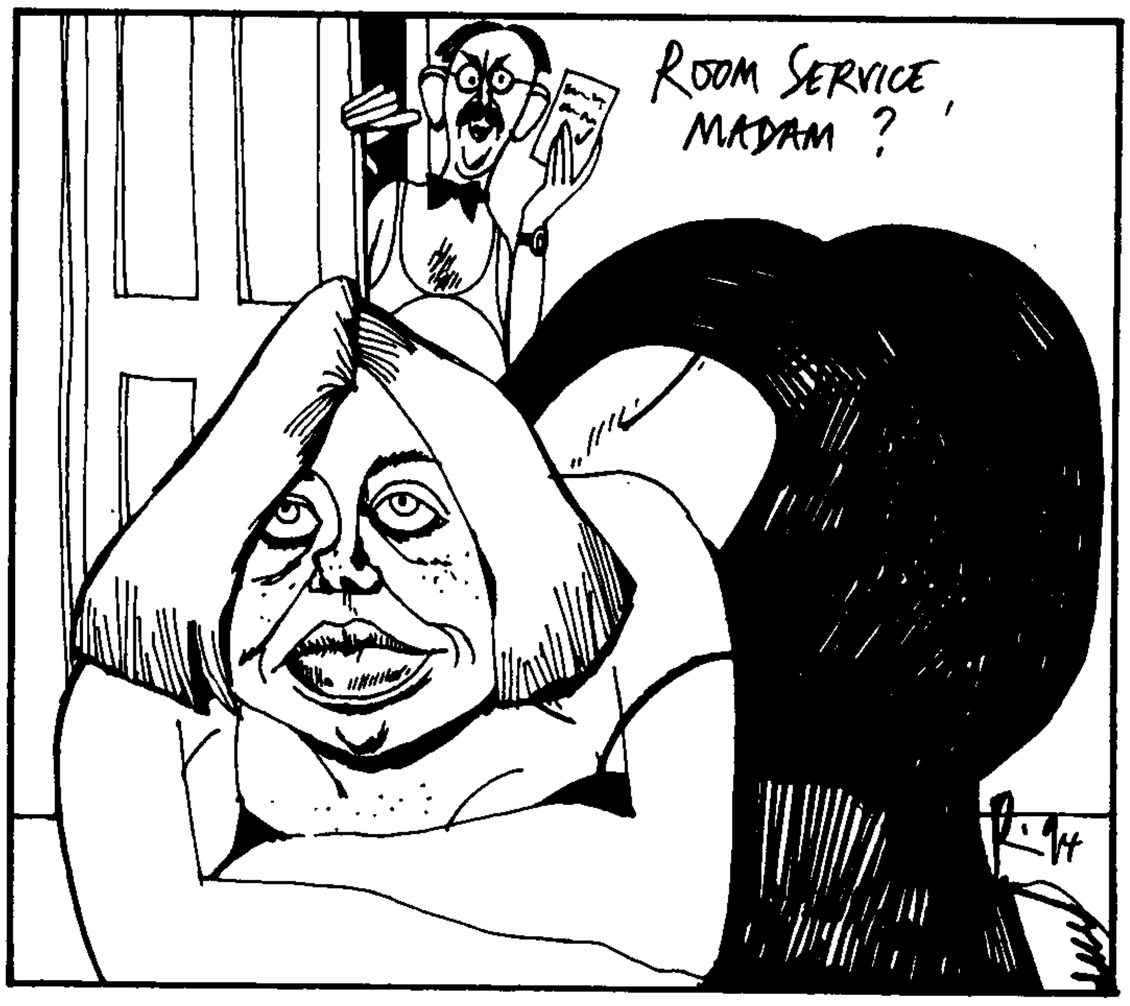
Somehow, though, Freely's tone is wildly uneven: never wholly salacious, never completely coy, unsure whether she wants to write some good clean smut, send that smut up as she writes it, or satirise what women want even as she offers it to them.

Queerly, the sharpest and most injurious parallel is with Evelyn Waugh's satire of the Californian death industry, *The Loved One*. Waugh might have confined himself to funeral parlours rather than bumper orgasms, but there is the same fascination with bizarre ritual; the same sense of hygienic narcissism.

The Loved One, though, is deadpan, whereas Freely can't resist zealous nudges about the paraphernalia of bought sex (EDT, for instance, is an acronym for "Estimated Delivery Time", and we're not talking about babies). Neither can she wrench herself away from larky details about penis-shaped furniture and foreground the characters.

There is a plot, of sorts, about Fiona's entrapment at the hands of the centre's manager, a figure form her past, but the whole thing is exploded and cast aside in a paragraph or two. No suspense, consequently, just a conceit — sisters are doing it for themselves meets Aldous Huxley — milked away (oops!) and dallied with for 130 pages.

In fact, the Huxley connection is a strong one. The interactive "hands on" cinema in *Brave New World* was known as "The Feelies". Now at least we have a phrase to describe the sensation of sex with someone you can't see or a trip down "The Road to Damascus" (a conveyor belt where one is groped by invisible hands) — "The Freelys".



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ THE chattering classes were abuzz at the thought of a clash between two Titans from the worlds of Literature and Art.

***Modern Painters* magazine had decided there was only one man brilliant enough to interview the artist Damien "Black Sheep" Hirst about his smelly work — and that was fellow enfant terrible Will Self, that well known man of rude letters and dead dog fucking.**

Sadly, Hirst wouldn't play ball. "Self is not clever enough," he decided airily.

■ *LONDON'S most discriminating publisher, Christopher Maclehose, is under threat from the brutes in New York.*

Harvill Press, over which Maclehose presides, is the jewel in the crown of HarperCollins and has, for many years, been bringing English readers many of the world's great books. It is tightly run and is unique in that it rarely publishes a dud. It is the kind of list which Jonathan Cape and Secker & Warburg were in their heydays, but with more essential translated texts.

HarperCollins' chief bottlewasher, George Craig in New York, can't see the point of Harvill publishing authors other than the likes of George Macdonald Fraser and Gerald Seymour, whose advances are around £250,000. These books keep Harvill going in the short term; in the long term, Harvill will keep literature going.

The real trouble, which Craig wouldn't be inclined to acknowledge, is that the multitude of crap HarperCollins publishes doesn't earn sufficiently to enable Harvill to be subsidised in its lean financial years. Why should today's chief executive care about future backlists when they know they won't be around to reap the benefits of intelligent and sensitive publishing?

'Bookworm'

Mr Norman Bank and Valley Forge Inc

IN *EYE* 844 we stated that the new company which took over the management of the Ministry of Sound after Dance Studio UK Limited went into liquidation was controlled by an offshore company registered in Liberia, "Valleyforce Inc [sic], which is master-minded by James Palumbo's South African chum, Norman Bank".

We now accept that this was wrong. Valley Forge Inc, the Liberian company with which Mr Bank is associated, was a 50 per cent shareholder in the old company, Dance Studio UK Limited. Its shareholding is probably valueless.

Neither Valley Forge Inc nor Mr Bank has any connection with the Ministry of Sound's new corporate entity. Indeed, Valley Forge has had litigation, now settled, against James Palumbo arising out of the management of the old company.

footnotes

SERGEANT'S MESS 2

DETECTIVE Sgt Christopher Crowley, the police officer who discredited the identification evidence of a key prosecution witness in the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, was closely involved in twice arresting and charging a key identification witness in another racist murder in the same area of south London.

THE LAWRENCE MURDER

In May last year, Stephen Lawrence, who was young and black, was stabbed to death by a racist gang while waiting at a bus stop. There was one key witness to the stabbing, a friend of Stephen's who was with him at the bus stop.

The police arrested likely racist suspects. One of them was picked out of an identification parade by the witness. As the last *Eye* reported,

ANGRY PROTEST: Richard and Audrey Adams, parents of Rolan and Nathan

after another identification parade, the witness was driven home by DS Crowley, who is based at Plumstead police station and is not part of the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry.

A conversation took place which became heated. After dropping the witness off, DS Crowley made a statement casting doubt on the credibility of the witness. Though the witness vehemently denied the sergeant's account and interpretation of the conversation, the statement was enough to convince the crown prosecution service (CPS) that the identification could not be sustained in court and the case against the identified suspect should be dropped. The suspects walked free.

THE ADAMS MURDER

On 21 February 1991, Rolan Adams, who was young and black, was stabbed to death by a racist gang while waiting at a bus stop. There was one key witness to the stabbing, Rolan's brother Nathan, then 14 years old, who was with him at the bus stop.

The police arrested likely suspects from a gang called the Nazi Turn Outs. On an identification parade, Nathan Adams picked out one of them, Mark Thornborrow, as the murderer. Thornborrow and Co were due to be committed for trial on 6 June.

On 30 April, five weeks before the committal, Nathan Adams was arrested. He and a young black friend were interviewed by DS Crowley at Plumstead police station. DS Crowley alleged that they had assaulted a member of the Nazi Turn Outs on a bus. So when the case came to committal, the key prosecution witness was under the cloud of an assault charge. Nevertheless, Thornborrow and four others were committed for trial at the Old Bailey for the following October.

Nathan Adams was due to come up for trial on the assault charge on 12 September. But there was a hitch. Nathan's friend was not charged. When Nathan's lawyers asked why, the prosecution claimed that police could not find the friend to interview him. They stuck to this line until it was disclosed that the friend had already been interviewed, with his lawyer, at Plumstead police station. In some embarrassment, the prosecution dropped the case.

The very next day, Nathan Adams was arrested again by officers from Plumstead police station. He was charged, again by DS Crowley, with a robbery. So when the four Nazi Turn Outs went on trial for the murder of his brother in October 1991, Nathan Adams, the main prosecution witness, was under the cloud of a robbery charge.

Nevertheless, he gave his evidence, and Mark Thornborrow was convicted of murder and sent to prison for life.

Nearly four months later, on 7 February 1992, Nathan Adams came up on the robbery charge. Once again the prosecution dropped the case.

Thus the main identification witness had been arrested twice, once before committal and once before the main trial, and accused by the same police officer of charges which were later dropped.

Likiss Lips

■ SIR Michael Lickiss (*sic*), knighted last year, was the obvious man to take the chair at Accountancy Television (ATV), a thrilling new project to set up a telly training scheme for accountants.

The BBC and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, of which Sir Michael is a past president, were the main sponsors.

Sadly, poor Sir Michael saw the whole ATV project develop into one gigantic flop. Hardly anyone joined up, and after a rather pathetic 18 months ATV slid into receivership, owing a million pounds or so.

Still, Sir Michael has some compensations. He was one of the inspired appointments to the council of an exciting quango, the Further Education Funding Council, which dishes out taxpayers' money to the recently-privatised further education colleges.

The FEFC circular for March this year announces a glamorous new "value for money" study of college purchases. The fieldwork for this extensive survey will be carried out by consultants. Five firms bid for the juicy contract which eventually went to the well-known accountancy firm Grant Thornton. The decision must have given nothing but pleasure to Sir Michael Lickiss... senior partner of Grant Thornton.

Christian Andersen

A WONDERFULLY witty letter "for publication" comes to the *Eye* from Mr Keith Burgess, managing partner of Andersen Consulting.

He complains about an item in the *Eye* before last which referred to a report on taxes and benefits his firm had carried out for the Labour party's commission for social justice.

The *Eye* assumed Andersen had been paid for its work. Not so, says Mr Burgess. Why then, the Eye asked, had such an expensive firm done work for the Labour party for nothing? Here is Mr Burgess's earnest reply: "Interest in Social Justice is not the preserve of a few. We too are concerned with Social Justice. We were delighted to contribute free of charge to an area where we have expertise."

Mr Burgess also denies the *Eye*'s report that his firm was criticised by the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) over the Wessex Regional Health Authority scandal. Here are paragraphs 40 and 41 of the report:

We are concerned that although the Regional Health Authority had told Andersen Consulting and other non-preferred bidders that they had not been finally excluded from the bidding process for the core computer systems, they nevertheless involved Andersen Consulting in appraising available computer software to run on the preferred bidder's systems. We note that subsequently, following a retendering exercise, the contract to supply core computer systems and software was awarded to Andersen Consulting at an inquorate meeting of the Authority and that this contract contained no quality provisions and no maximum price.

We note that Andersen Consulting do not believe there to have been a conflict of interest. However, it is essential for the proper conduct of business that public bodies should be free, and be seen to be free, from any relationships which could materially interfere with their ability to take open and fair decisions aimed at securing value for money in the public interest, and we endorse the Regional Health Authority's view that it is clearly wrong for somebody who is tendering for NHS business also to be advising the NHS as their consultant.

When the *Eye* put these paragraphs to Mr Burgess, he replied as follows: "My reading of them is that they criticise the Authority for not assuring the quality of the bidding process. We cannot be held responsible for the bidding process."

Not everyone might read them quite like that.

PS. On May 12, the day John Smith died, Andersen Consulting announced the appointment of a new director of research. She is Patricia Hewitt, former press secretary to Neil Kinnock when he was Labour leader. Hewitt will stay on as deputy chair of the Labour Party's commission for social justice.

Customs is always wrong

SINCE Lord Justice Scott announced that his hearings were over, only diehards turned up to his last few sessions. The resulting lack of publicity was a profound relief for *HM customs* and excise, who got the most terrible pasting from the judge and his chuckling inquisitor, Presiley Baxendale QC.

Several interesting facts emerged from the bloodletting. First, there was more about the role of the cabinet office in the row over supergun which broke in April 1990.

Customs seized the gun at Teesport and charged the managing director of its manufacturer, Peter Mitchell, and a Bristol engineer called Christopher Cowley. The prosecutions were dropped six months later.

Cowley always believed, as he told the Commons trade and industry select committee in January 1992, that "customs were reporting to 10 Downing Street". This was vigorously denied to the select committee by Mr Peter Pigden, assistant to the chief customs investigating officer, who said (on 27 January 1992): "We are an independent prosecuting authority and we were not reporting to anyone outside the department."

A rather different emphasis came this month from Mr Pigden's boss, Douglas Tweddle, customs chief investigator, who told Scott of the exceptional interest in the case *outside* customs. All the media, he said, gave continual coverage to the supergun inquiry. "Then," he went on, "there was the cabinet office interest."

One top customs man who did write to the cabinet at the time of supergun was Mr Alexander Russell, a director and a commissioner of customs. He was worried about the forthcoming investigation by the Commons select committee. Writing to Mr W.D. Reeves, the under-secretary at the cabinet office supervising the arms trade, he explained: "Customs's prime objective is to dissuade the committee from examining the evidence collected by customs in the course of its investigations."

This sounded rather like a crude cover-up. Presiley Baxendale read Mr Russell his letter and asked why he was so keen to keep information away from the MPs. Russell grovelled and replied: "I think an inquiry of this kind pinpoints unfortunate wording time and again in the heat of the matter." In fact, he grovelled on, he and his officials would have preferred for the information, which he said he wanted covered up, to be exposed.

The phrase "unfortunate wording" came up again and again in the inquiry, especially in the evidence of Mr Andrew Biker, the unhappy customs solicitor in charge of prosecuting Matrix Churchill, BSA and Wickman Bennett, three Midlands arms-exporting firms.

Customs' method of prosecuting these cases was to lump a bunch of exports together and label them a "specially designed package" of arms, even though only a small handful of the goods were classified as arms and therefore needed an export licence.

Mr Biker obviously wasn't very confident that his prosecution of BSA would succeed on this "catch-all" basis. In one internal memo, embarrassingly read out at the Scott inquiry, he let slip his view that there was "little likelihood" of the "package prosecution" succeeding.

Lord Justice Scott intervened mercilessly to point out that the central guideline whether to proceed with a prosecution was whether or not it was likely to succeed. Why, he asked flatly, did Mr Biker continue with a prosecution which he himself admitted in writing was unlikely to succeed? Poor Mr Biker was a sorry sight to behold. He just managed to stammer out his reply: his "wording" had been, er, "unfortunate".

AN INSPECTOR APPALS

COPIES of the official report of an adjournment debate in the Commons on 15 April should be widely distributed at St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

Of special interest is a stern sentence from the speech of Nigel Forman, Tory MP for Carshalton. "I cannot end without censuring the deplorable action of Inspector Bourne-Taylor." This is believed to be a reference to Mr Geoffrey Bourne-Taylor, a former inspector in the Metropolitan Police and now domestic bursar at St Edmund Hall.

Mr Forman was speaking up for his constituent Gordon Warren, who spent 30 years as a constable in the Met under the illusion that his main duty was to fight crime on the streets. In April 1982, he was caught out suffering from that illusion by his superior officer at Sutton police station, Inspector Bourne-Taylor.

The inspector had helped to organise a "treat for the lads" — an all-night party with lots of drinks and a good selection of blue movies. Constable Warren refused to attend the party and concentrated on his duties on the streets of Sutton. Inspector Bourne-Taylor was outraged. He promptly denounced PC Warren as mentally ill. This diagnosis was later backed up by his superior officer — one Chief Superintendent Rideout — and the medical officer of the Met, one Dr Bott. In 1985, after a medical appeal which completely cleared him of any mental illness, PC Warren was suspended and later sacked from the force.

One cop and his dog: Gordon Warren

Mr Warren has been fighting the Met ever since. Now at last, 12 years after the drinks and blue movies party, the commissioner of the Metropolitan police has admitted that there was not a word of truth in any of the allegations against Mr Warren, has agreed that his record of service was impeccable, has extended the most grovelling apology and offered him £85,000 compensation.

Mr Warren, who has spent £30,000 of his own money on his legal costs, is still negotiating.

What happened to Mr Bourne-Taylor? In 1984, he became an instructor in human awareness at the Police Training College at Hendon. There he edited a curious journal entitled *The Peeler*, in which he wrote a feature entitled *Notes from a Psychoanalyst's Desk*. "We are," one issue announced, "organising frank, nude encounter groups in the changing room after swimming...so friends, be happy, and always blow a kiss to your friend in the staff whenever you feel like it."

Before long Mr Bourne-Taylor was on the move again. A report in the *Eye* on 3 March 1989 referred to an editorial in the 1987-88 edition of the college magazine of St Edmund Hall. It hailed the appointment of the new bursar as a former head of special branch, as a holder of the Queens Medal for Exemplary Service and a former director of music with the Met police band.

Alas, the *Eye* was obliged to point out, none of this was true. He had never been head of special branch, never held the Queens Medal and never been a director of music for the police band. "No doubt," opined the *Eye*, "these appalling inaccuracies have embarrassed Mr Bourne-Taylor and St Edmund Hall will be quick to correct them and chastise the author."

There have been no reports of chastisement.

BOLTER WHO DIDN'T BOLT

■ MORE THAN a year ago, on 5 March 1993, Neville Chamberlain (*sic*), chairman of British Nuclear Fuels (the only nationalised industry the government loves to subsidise), put out a mournful statement:

"Corporate Affairs director Harold Bolter is to leave the company after 17 years service... I would like to place on record my deep sadness [etc etc]... Nevertheless his leaving in such a public way is a consequence of the 'open and honest' policy of BNFL management, which he himself designed and pioneered."

On the same day Mr Bolter explained that he was leaving because "decorating and minor repair work was carried out at my previous and my present home by contractors who work for BNFL — the cost of some of the work was passed on to BNFL." Mr Bolter explained that he hadn't known about this but "ignorance was no excuse. It is right," he concluded, "that I leave the company."

But did he leave?

BNFL shareholders were surprised to find Harold Bolter listed as a director of the company in the last annual return, dated December 1993.

A spokeswoman for BNFL told the *Eye*: "Mr Bolter left the premises, but he didn't leave the payroll until April 1st this year." Asked why, she said he had "remained on the payroll until after an investigation into his case had reported." Then, apparently, he left the payroll. "He was a director all the time till April," she said.

This means he received about £80,000 in pay after his principled and ostentatious resignation.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 2183

In the City

NEWS that *Mail on Sunday* City editor Clive Wolman aspires to challenging the mighty *Financial Times* with a rival business daily is un-likely to have the Pearson empire quaking in its Guccis. For one thing, the *FT* already knows only too well how hard it is to take on an entrenched rival with a command-ing position in its own market and make money: it has made no dent in the *Wall Street Journal*'s supremacy in the US. For another, such an assault requires deep pockets and equally boundless patience. This may explain why Wolman's own employer, Associated Newspapers, passed on the project, presumably modestly housed within Wolman's company, Global Business Journals, which is run from his London home, as have several other newspaper groups. Mirror Group Newspapers, however, continues to retain an interest despite the pressing problems of the recently colonised *Independent*.

But perhaps one of the *FT*'s best reasons to be cheerful is that it knows Clive Wolman and his track record only too well. It employed him for seven years before he moved to the *MoS*. Both there and at the *MoS* Wolman displayed an unreassuring capacity to get stories very badly wrong.

He was responsible in 1987 for one of the few grovelling apologies ever published by the *FT*. This concerned events which supposedly took place when Gerald Ronson was arrested over the Guinness affair. Wolman's account of a conversation between Ronson's solicitor, Lord Mishcon, and the police was described only two days later as "quite inaccurate" while the words attributed to Det Supt Richard Botwright, who headed the Guinness investigation, "were not said" at all!

Wolman also accused Ronson, Mishcon and Michael Sherrard QC of being responsible for sending a letter to Guinness which "omitted certain material facts". The *FT* backtracked at speed on this too, accepting that it was "quite wrong" that Ronson would have been advised to make such omissions. The grovel concluded with the statement that the *FT* "unreservedly apologise" to Ronson and his legal advisers.

After that incident "Scoop" Wolman's career at the *FT* went, not surprisingly, into something of a decline until he moved to the *MoS* in 1989. But there too he has managed to preside over some spectacular factual fiascos which have resulted in expensive legal bills and more grovelling.

Just before the 1992 election Wolman lead the *MoS* with the revelation that Labour peer Lord Hollick, aka "Top Kinnock aide", aka "Goldfinger", was participating in a tax avoidance scheme involving payment in bullion. That error did not survive the night. By the final edition Hollick had been dropped out as the scheme had been used by his company MAI but not to pay the peer. This little factual inaccuracy, aka "smear", no doubt much appreciated by Associated Newspaper's Tory backing tax exile owner Viscount Rothermere, brought a raft of writs.

Another error of judgement was in continuing to use the services of pop singer turned actor turned financial adviser Adam Faith, despite his client prospecting for old friend Roger Levitt and recommending of companies with which he had business links.

Then there was Wolman's fearless exposé of the life and crimes (fraud, arson, bribery) of Sir Isaac Wolfson — "widely regarded as one of the twentieth century's greatest entrepreneurs and philanthropists". This heroic demolition job on the founder of Great Universal Stores followed immediately upon the not so great man's death at 93 in 1991!

Despite the fact that for years Wolfson had been in a coma-like state and therefore hardly able to instruct solicitors, Wolman and the *MoS* could not summon the courage to publish details of events in the 1930s and 1940s until he was more than brain dead. And why was Wolman so determined to publish such old news? It transpired that "my great uncles", brothers Abraham and George Rose, had been shafted by Wolfson out of GUS, itself a tale well known to all those who knew and did not love "IW".

As recently as 1 May, the "Financial Journal of the Year" was forced to make an immediate, one week later retraction of its lead item that the Inland Revenue was on the case of Suter and its chairman David Abell over offshore share dealing.

Such evidence of impartiality along with Wolman's record for accuracy will doubtless serve to encourage those investors whose £10 million is wanted for his new venture.

FINANCIAL journalists are rightly outraged when company directors and public figures fail to make disclosure of personal interests. But they are rarely so forthright when it comes to their own monetary motes.

Take for example the "plug" for financial newsletter/magazine *Breaking the Mould* which appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 13 March in the course of describing City suspicions of business information provider MAID — now back to approaching half the 110p placing price, despite encouraging noises from founder Dan Wagner in a bid to stem the selling and the rumours of internal problems. *Breaking the Mould* had featured a sharp critique of MAID by vaunted analyst Terry Smith, whose reputation is based on knowing all about accountancy tricks.

What the *Sunday Telegraph* did not reveal was that its regular columnist and staunch Smith supporter Ian Watson (who abandoned the post of *Sunday Telegraph* City editor for the Maxwell shilling) is a director of the company that publishes *Breaking the Mould*. Furthermore, fellow *BTM* director David Elias just happens to be a director of Terry Smith Publishing, while another director, Clive Kendall, is a director of Cyrus Publishing where Watson just happens to be editor in chief.

ANOTHER *Sunday Telegraph* blindspot, shared by the *Independent* and all too many other newspapers, concerns the old company law breaker Jim Slater. Slater received a "puff" for his latest how to invest book on 1 May (25 lucky *Sunday Telegraph* readers were to get it free) as part of yet another Slater sermon on picking shares.

This went alongside another "plug", this time for an 18 May seminar on "How to identify stockmarket winners" where readers could obtain a £10 discount on the entry fee. "Changi Jim" was to be the star speaker at the seminar, despite the less than impressive record of the "legendary investor" as the not at all *Independent*'s share tipster.

Under the headline "From motors to millions", the *Sunday Telegraph* managed to encapsulate Slater's career without once having the bad manners to mention the enforced rescue of Slater Walker, Singapore's bid to extradite Slater for fraud or his conviction for breaking the companies act. But then this was business, not journalism, and such facts from long, long ago would hardly encourage audiences at £85 a pop for this "legendary name in stock market investment".

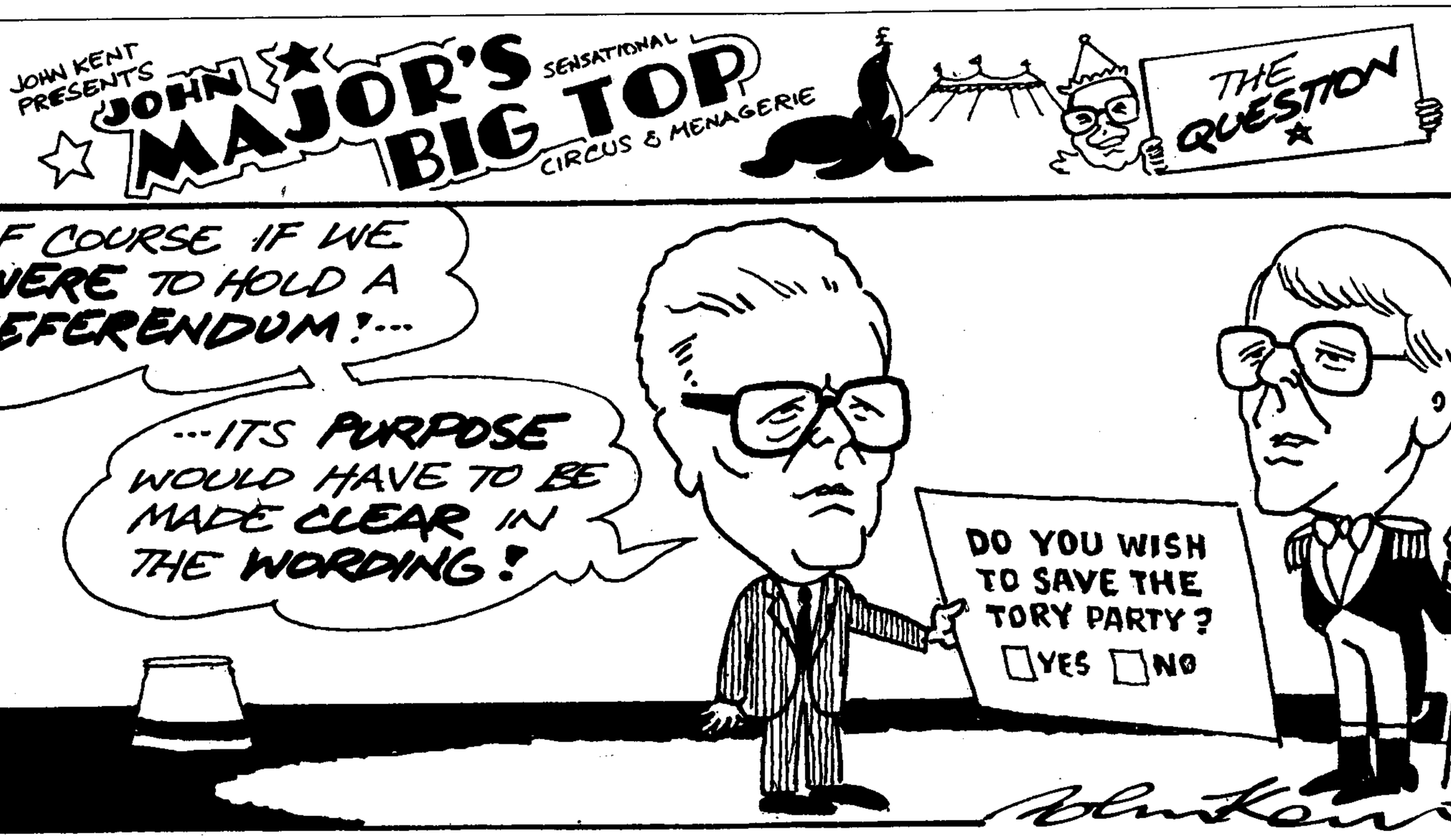
THOSE concerned with the rehabilitation of offenders will be relieved to hear good news on two celebrity defendants.

Now fully recovered from the rigours of community service and bankruptcy, Roger Levitt was able to enjoy a trip to Copenhagen to see Arsenal triumph in the European Cup Winners Cup in the company of his erstwhile neighbour, accountant Panos Eliades, thereby refuting suggestions that they had fallen out over "Thoroughly Dishonest" Roger's role as adviser to world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

Meanwhile that other dodger, Roger Seelig, thankfully saved from the suicidal tendencies that necessitated the stopping of his Guinness trial, continues to make a comeback in the business world.

A new ally is said to be Martin Landau, who has recently returned to the property world from a comfortable tax exile in Monte Carlo to ramp (oops) revamp Development Securities. It is said Martin and Roger are often to be seen together discussing either art or property deals.

'Slicker'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Ask any of the country's 13.5 million smokers and they'll probably admit, however grudgingly, that smoking is a health risk.

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In fact, tobacco companies usually have just two words to say on the subject of health: 'No' and 'Comment'.

They have never admitted that there is a proven link between smoking and lung cancer, or indeed any other smoking-related disease.

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Clearly, it is time for a tobacco company to break the silence. Enter the Enlightened Tobacco Company: the only cigarette manufacturer willing to tell it like it is.

There are currently 264 different brands of cigarette available in Great Britain. Yet, despite the stringent rules that apply to cigarette advertising, manufacturers are still able to lend their products an air of sophistication.

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Ironically, it is usually only the health warning at the bottom that gives any clue as to the nature of the product being advertised.

And neither is any clue given in the names of the cigarettes themselves. Many of them are still able to conjure up an image of something expensive, stylish, sophisticated or exotic.

Then there is Death.

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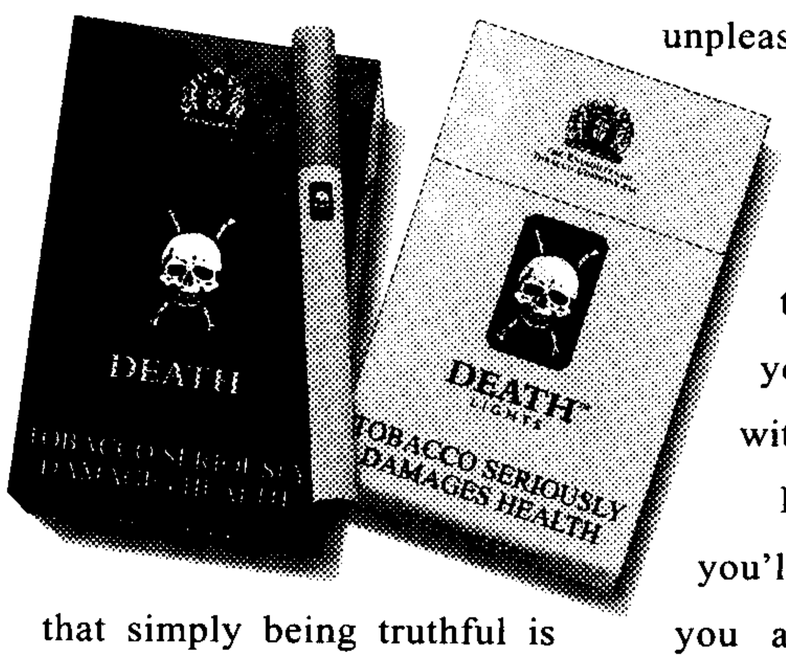
Now it could be suggested that a cigarette company which appears to go out of its way to warn you not to smoke is a paradox every bit as insoluble as Joseph Heller's Catch 22. It isn't really. It's just being honest.

We are not anti-smoking. That would be ridiculous.

If you're a smoker we want you to buy our cigarettes. That's why both Death and Death Lights are made from the finest blends of luxury Virginia tobacco. But if we sell cigarettes, we should also be sufficiently honest to remind you of the dangers.

We don't believe, however,



that simply being truthful is enough. We openly admit to the link between smoking and lung cancer, so shouldn't we be prepared to do something about it? We're helping to create the problem after all.

That's precisely why the Enlightened Tobacco Company has decided to give 10% of all its pre-tax profits to non-vivisection cancer charities.

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This advice is also offered to those wishing to avoid such unpleasant illnesses as heart disease, emphysema and bronchitis.

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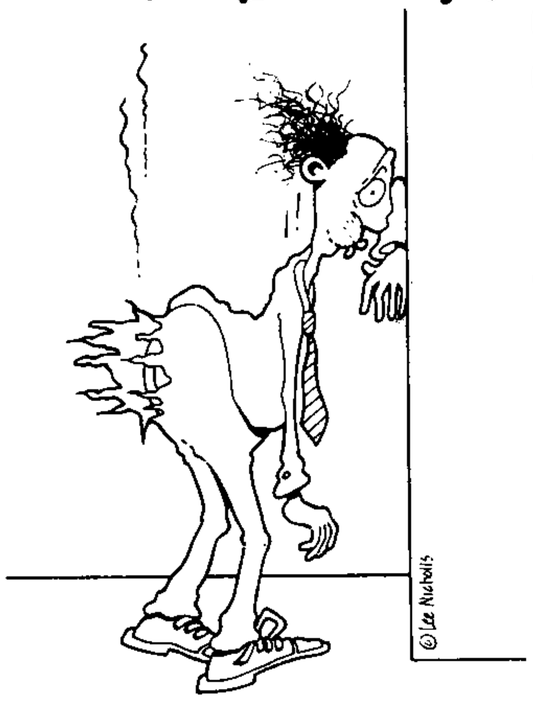

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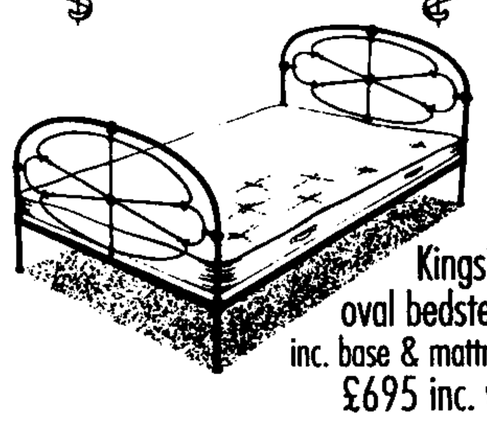

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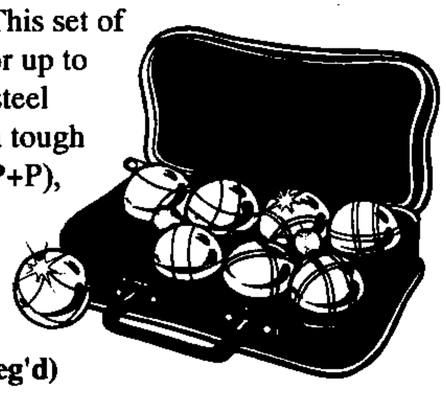

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Sunday Times

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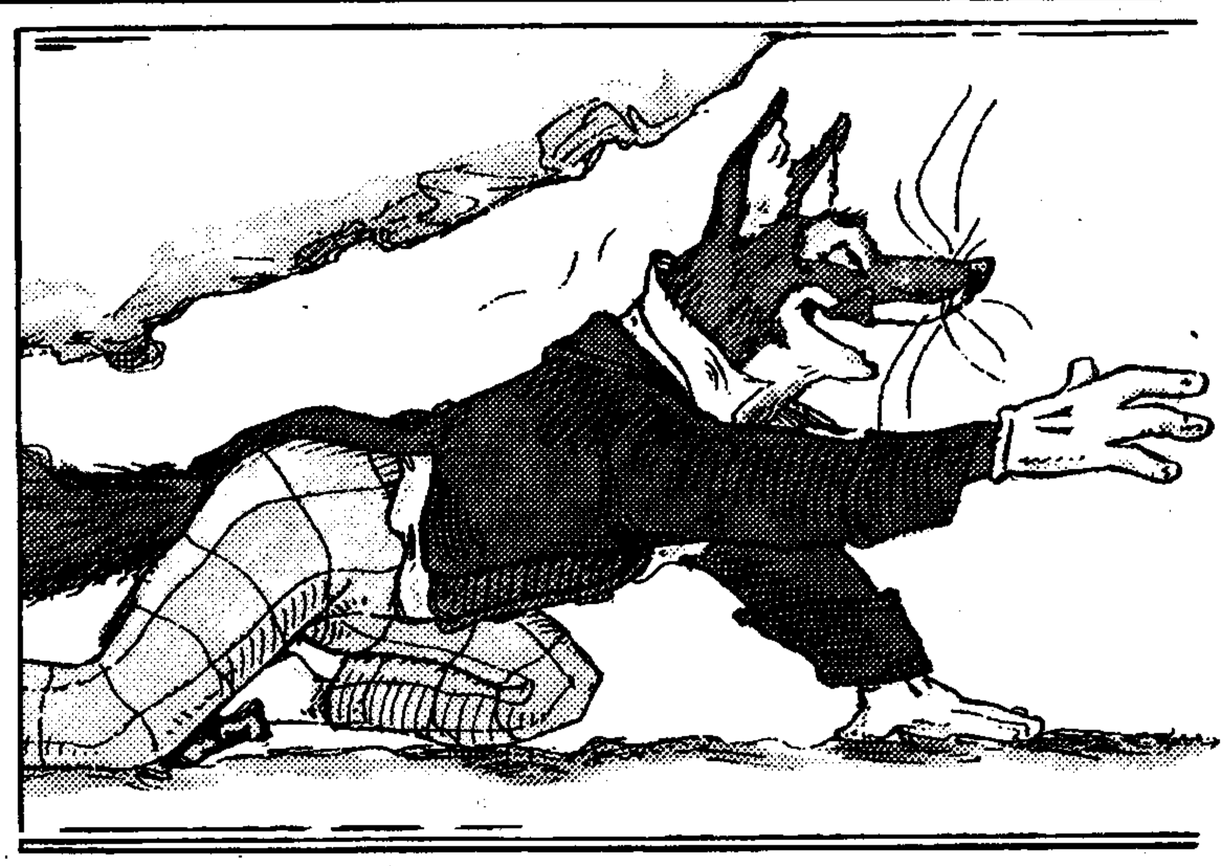

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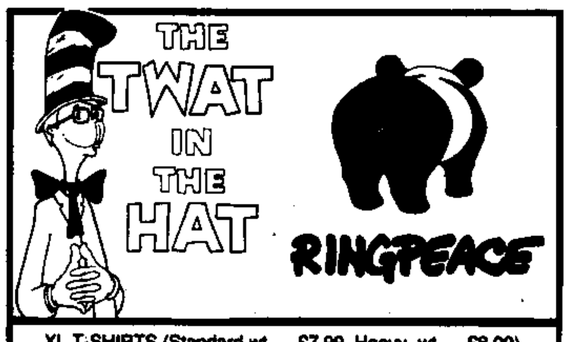

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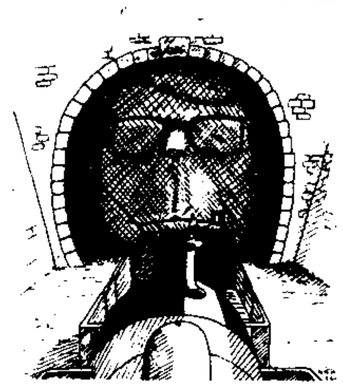

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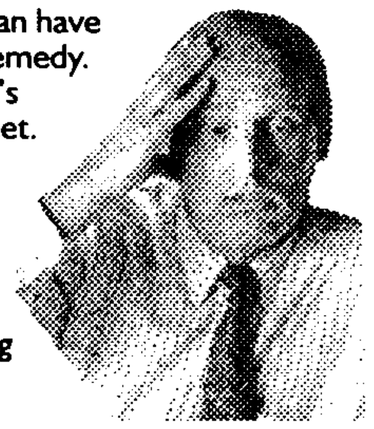

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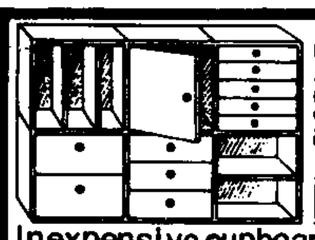

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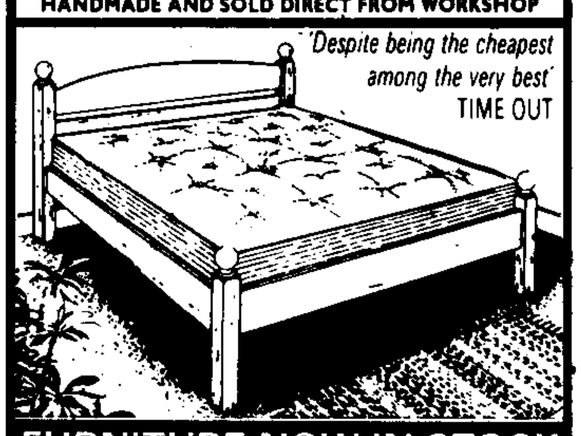

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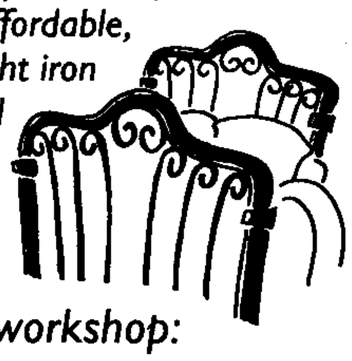

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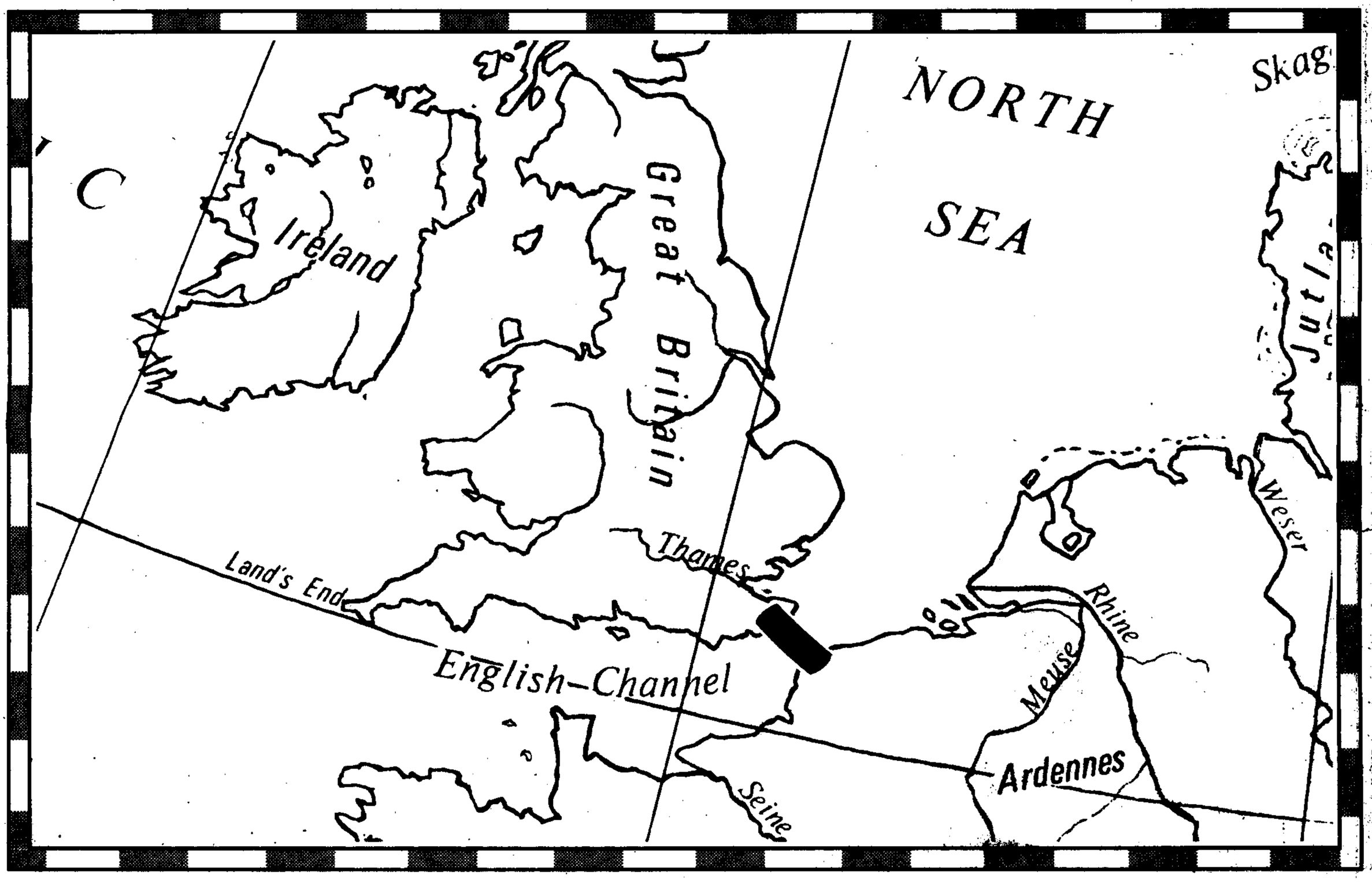

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